

THE
EXCELLENCY
OF

A Publick Spirit :

Set forth in a

SERMON

Preach'd (*since much enlarged*) at the

FUNERAL

Of that late Reverend Divine

Dr. SAMUEL ANNESLEY :

Who departed this Life Dec 31. 1696.

In the 77th Year of his Age.

With a Brief Account of

His LIFE and DEATH.

By Daniel Williams, Minister of the Gospel.

L O N D O N,

Printed for John Duntton, at the
Raven in Jewen street, 1697.

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*To that Flock of Christ, over which
the Reverend Dr. Annesley
was lately Pastor.*

Much honoured and esteemed,

THis presents you with a Discourse (for substance) preached and printed at your desire. I faintly hope its acceptance with many, when Justice is become a stranger, and a meer honest Man a glorious Title. Publick Usefulness must scarce escape with the Brand of Folly with those, whose Trade is turned into tricking, or account publick Employes no more than a decent opportunity to cheat the People. But Truth may profit them, unless a Zeal for their Disease will not allow their reading what is directed for their recovery. To you, and some others, this Subject must appear too plainly instamp'd with God's Image and Authority, and a tendency to Common Weal, to admit the Censure of a Narrow Spirit (however disguised.) to be it's Standard. Especially, when this is what commended your late Pastor to such unusual Affection, as you expressed to him living, dying, yea, when dead. Yet this might be expected, seeing his very Spirit is transfused into his People; by whose Bounty (in good part) he performed such great Things for a common Good. *Even Ministers, had such cause of glorying in so many Publick Spirited Hearers, as yours,*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Mr. Denham, Mr. Hartley, Mr. Cockerill, with many now at rest, might be named; the living I scarce forbear. The Sermon is much enlarged, and the Method somewhat changed, that it may more contribute to common Serviceableness. What's more desirable than to be Useful in making others so? Hence the eminent Services of Mr. Brand, so revived the Dr. And hereby we most extend and perpetuate publick Benefits; yea, oft above our own Ability, and beyond our Life. Promote you that Design in this barren Age, by putting this Tract into Hands who need it, and by your own vigorous Example and Prayers; that it may be seen the Spring of your Charity and Christian Activeness, is more lasting than the Exemplary Life or Labours of your deceased Guide. May you find, in Spirituals and Externals, there is that scattereth and yet increaseth: The liberal Soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself. And all of us be excited to more holy Fervour, by the Death of two such as Dr. Annesley and fervent Mr. Oldfield in one Day, and worthy Mr. James soon after. I am,

Your Servant in the Gospel,

Daniel Williams.

THE
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OF

A Publick Spirit.

ACTS XIII. Ver. 36.

*For David, after he had served
his own Generation, by the Will
of God, fell on sleep.*

YOUR Request bringing me hither upon this sad Occasion, (your Venerable Pastor's Death) I have made choice of this Text as proper to inforce an Important Duty, which, tho' so little regarded by most in our Age, yet the deceased was faithful in the practice of; yea, so Eminent, that I hope he will be a moving Example to
B others

The Excellency of

others in this, wherein the signal Excellency of his own Life consisted.

The words read are part of *St. Paul's* Sermon to the *Jews* at *Antioch*, in which, after a fit Introduction.

1. He proves Jesus to be the Christ from *ver.* 23. to 38. an Article which (supposing the knowledge of God) hath the greatest influence into all our Religious Hopes and Duties; and therefore a firm assent thereto ought to be more endeavour'd than I fear is usual with many, who boast of a Christian Name. This point he argues from these Topicks: Jesus was of *David's Seed* which the Christ was to be, 23, 24. Jesus was he whom *John* (in such esteem with them) *did bear Testimony* to, that he was the Christ, 24, 25. In the unjust condemnation and barbarous killing of this Jesus, the *Jews* had unwittingly fulfilled, in every circumstance, *all the Prophecies*, which foretold the unjust and cruel usages the Christ should meet with, 27, 28, 29. This Jesus God had certainly raised from the Dead, according as it was in several places Prophesied of the Christ, and promised to him; which Resurrection, was God's Testimony concerning him, that he was his Eternal Son Incarnate. But lest any might object that that Text, *Pf. 16. 10.* was fulfilled in *David*, the Apostle obviates

obviates this, by shewing that *David* lay in his Grave so long as to putrefie, which the Christ was not to do, neither did our Jesus; and by this occasion the words of my Text are introduced, as *David's* Praise, which the Apostle would not omit, tho' his Argument lies in that part of the Verse which I have not read, viz. *He saw Corruption.* And the following v. 38, 39. are both Arguments for Jesus being the Christ, in that *forgiveness of sin* (to which the *Mosaicke* Ceremonies and Sacrifices were altogether unavailable but as Types and Shadows respecting what Jesus did and suffered) was preached through this Jesus.

2. And also a serious offer of forgiveness to all of them, made in the Name and Authority of our Saviour Christ.

3. He inforceth this with an awakening caution, viz. That they prevent not their own Salvation, yea, aggravate not their Misery by rejecting this Jesus, the Christ, the Lord; q. d. the Lord Jesus, fulfilling all that's foretold of his Death and Resurrection; his being the Crucified and Risen Saviour; yea, the offer of that blessed forgiveness he purchased, will not suffice to your Salvation, unless you also trust and receive him. Nay, if you receive him not, and accept not Salvation in the way he pro-

poseth, your punishment will be sorer than if forgiveness had been never offered; yea, than if there were no Saviour, v. 40, 41. for the profitable matter, not the meer connexion, having thus far diverted, I assume the Text, which gives us account,

I. Of *David's* Publick Usefulness while living; he served his own Generation by the Will of God. Γενεᾷ and ἑαυτῇ, being alike governed by the Verb ὑπακούσας, causeth another reading to be as Grammatical, viz. After he had served the Will of God in his own Generation; (that of *Erasmus* being too remote to deserve much regard, viz. That he fell asleep by the Will of God) yet the sence of both readings alike secures the great Duty of Publick Usefulness to be *David's* Praise; for if you prefer the latter, his Service is determined to the Publick Weal in his own Generation, tho' it may more expressly include also his care for his own Soul by his obedience to God's Will, as prescribing the Rule by which we must be saved; (which was the Gospel Law then as truly as it's now) of which, a faithful improvement of our Talents is no small part. But the order of the words most favours our own Translation, which it's a fault needlessly to recede from. The former part, viz. *Serving his Generation,*

Generation, will be so enlarged on as the scope of my discourse, that at present I need say no more than to note, that the word *Serve* ~~useless~~ ^{useless} is metaphorical, and denotes both the publick influence of *David's* Labours, and his great Subjection ; it alludes to a Man's Rowing in a Vessel under the conduct of a superior Pilot. The Royal Prophet was but an Under Rower, *i. e.* as much under Divine Authority, and as dependant, as if the meanest Man : He served in the Vessel, *viz.* the Church and State, the safe Passage whereof he consulted, and subserved, as his principal business.

By the Will of God. God did not only serve his purposes by him, which the most regardless and obstinate cannot prevent, but this Blessed Man did designedly and faithfully serve those purposes God intended in his Age and Place ; he obeyed God's Will as he had notice of it, and what ever labour, expence or danger attended it. This Will of God he still consulted, as to the matter and manner of his performances. If you read the History of *David's* Life, and the Book of *Psalms*, you'll find the laudable Character in my Text evidenc'd in almost an uninterrupted Series of publick and profitable Actions, from his very Youth to his Death : By him God saved

Israel from greatest Dangers, he secured their Peace, enlarged their Borders; he fought their Battels, united the Tribes, brought the Ark to Zion, established the Publick Worship, encouraged and propagated real Piety, exemplified the Divine Law in the course of his Practice; few are the instances wherein he came short of the Common Good as the scope: yea, his Heart was so enlarged, as to resolve greater things than God thought fit to permit his Execution of, as building the Temple, (for which, nevertheless, he prepared the Materials) How solicitous was he that his indispos'd Age it self might not fail to be useful to God's Honour in his own, yea, future Generations? Ps. 71. 17, 18. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth, and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also, when I am old and gray headed, O God forsake me not until I have shewed thy strength to this generation, and thy power to everyone that is to come. A Life so eminently useful might well warrant his saying, I bear up the pillars of the Earth, Ps. 73. 5. deserve the peoples acknowledgment, 2 Sam. 18. 3. Thou art worth ten thousands of us, and answer the Testimony the Omniscient God gave before-hand concerning him. Act. 13. 22. I have found David a man after my own heart, who will fulfil all my will.

2. David's

2. *David's Death*: *He fell asleep*, after, not before he had faithfully served a common good, nor later than he was capable to do so. Every Man is Immortal, be his danger never so great, till he hath accomplished the service God designeth by him; and there is scarce a good Man (that knows himself such) but would live till his course in service be finished, or would chuse to live longer than he can be serviceable: but when we are unfit to be Instruments of good to others, and are wrought, to a meetness for Glory, it's fit time others have our place whom Providence hath suited to God's further Designs, by somewhat peculiarly fitted to the rising Generation.

The word by which *David's Death* is expressed, *ἐκοιμήσατο*, he lay him down to sleep, which notes Death to be no terror to him, and that Resurrection would certainly ensue.

The former part of the Text is what I shall principally insist on; therein *David* is commended, and they who imitate his life partake of the like Honour. Two Observations the words easily afford.

1 *Obs.* It's an excellent Character of a deceased Person, that by Faithfulness and Diligence in his place, he hath been eminently useful in his Generation.

The Excellency of

To render this intelligible and useful,
I shall,

1. Explain this Character.
2. Give an account of some things requisite to render a Man eminently useful in his Generation, who is capable to be so by his Gifts, Estate, Office, &c.
3. Evidence the Excellency of this described Character.

For the Explication of this Character, I shall propose the following Heads, which I think will render that Duty plain, which I would this Day call you to the performance of.

1. God so disposeth of Men in their respective Generations, that they are capable of being benefited by each other.

The parts of a Political Body can no more say to each other, *I have no need of thee*, than those of the Natural, 1 Cor. 12. 21. which disposition of things is the foundation of all Societies; Men need each other, and are receptive of mutual Advantages: Conversation, Friendship, Families, Trades, Common Safety, (and what not) are provided for hereby, and without it would be defeated and cease, but the All-wise God hath placed Men in
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that posture towards each other, that no one is Self-sufficient. Some need Health, others Knowledge, others Defence, others Food and Raiment, others Counsel, others Reproof and Spiritual Instruction, others Comfort, and the like; in each of these respects, those words of our Saviour may be applied, *Joh. 12. 8. The poor you have always with you*: some that need your help, many in a great degree, most in one sort or other, so that none can pretend want of Objects, or Occasions, as a Plea why they are not useful, they are daily at hand, and adapted to the Nature and Proportion of your Talents; infinite Wisdom hath contrived the several wants of Mankind to give opportunity for employing that common Stock he hath distributed; and as wonderful is it, that those very wants be the great Means that the several Possessors of that Common Stock receive benefit by the shares thereof which they respectively do enjoy; for it's visible, that whatever any one Man enjoys would leave him distressed, unless by exchanging that with another, he were relieved by what that other Man possesseth and himself wants. Nay, that no Man may reflect on God as unkind to the World, because the Poor are so many, it's worthy our admiration that Poverty it self is very conducive to the Publick Good; not only as it prevents
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much sin, but as it's the greatest Spur to Diligence, Callings, Inventions and Services, which the Common Benefit depends upon; yea, were none poor, every Man would be next to miserable, by wanting all those conveniencies which they now obtain by any other persons Want, or desire of Wealth. Who would be Servants, private Soldiers, Seamen, Handicrafts-men, &c. if none were poor? If some would study Law, Physick, &c. it's from few of them that their Neighbours could expect the advantage of their Arts. They who would sail to other Countries, and bring back any thing of their peculiar growth, how few, if any besides themselves, should be the better for them? I wish I might not say we should have fewer Preachers, and not many so eager of Places in the Government. But I digress too far in justifying Providence in such necessities among Men, as render them capable of being benefited, and consequently in giving scope to others usefulness.

2. Every Man may be more or less useful to others; and every good Man is so.

Each may influence for benefit, tho' in different Kinds, and unequal Spheres. He that hath not Pounds, hath his Mites; and, tho' he cannot profit Multitudes, may benefit

nefit some few. If you cannot instruct the Ignorant, you can relieve the Poor, and encourage the Ministry: Are you so indigent that you have nothing to give, yet you may pray for many, and be Examples of Meekness and Patience. Some are unfit to serve the Publick, in an Office, who yet are capable to Vote for a Man that's fit to serve. Divine Bounty hath provided a supply among Men for those Necessities to which Mankind is subject. But a great part of the Misery of the World is owing to some Mens inordinate craving more than they need, and to others not duly laying out what they are intrusted with for others: Whereas, what God hath distributed among Men, is a Common Stock to benefit the Body; and of the several parts and sorts thereof I may say as of those Spiritual Gifts, *1 Cor. 12. 7. They are all given to profit others with our selves.* *Ἐἰς ὀφελὸν.* God allows not a Man in the Lord's Prayer so much as to ask daily Bread for himself alone.

Totally to neglect the benefit of others, argues such Unfaithfulness to God, and Injustice, yea Cruelty, to Men; that I repent not of saying, every good Man is useful to others. To be good and not to do good, is a contradiction; as it is to do good, and not to do that which is beneficial, *Psalms 112. 5. A good Man sheweth fa-*

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your, and lendeth. A *be thou warmed*, is equally an argument of a bad Heart, and of a *dead Faith*, *Jam. 2. 16.* That Religion which lieth in meer Words, tho' noisie; and in meer Hopes, tho' confident, will be found vain in its self, and useless to its Owners; it will not be saving to our selves, if it be not profitable to others.

3. God hath rendred some Men capable of greater and more publick service than others.

It's true of the publick Store of Talents, as of our common Mother the Earth, *Eccles. 5. 9.* *The profit of it is for all*; nevertheless, some Parts are a richer Soil than others. So some Men are far more capable of common Usefulness than their Neighbours be: And this by God's disposal, what ever be the just means of acquirement; yea, his permissive ordering hath place, tho' the means be unjust.

Capacities for service are various, according to Mens Offices, Gifts, Estates, Interest, Opportunities, and what ever else would render a Man publickly Useful, were the Possessor thereof but faithful and diligent. The Degrees of each of them determine to what measure a Man is *capable* to be a common Blessing; whether he
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be *actually* so or not. Vain it were for any Man to pretend himself less capable to do good than in truth he is, for God keeps a just account of the Place every Man stands in, and the Talents each Man possesseth; and he hath affixed a Charge of Service to the extent of every Man's Ability. A Magistrate or Minister may do more good than a private Person, a rich Man than a poor, one of great Parts than one of lesser: A Magistrate in higher Place than another in a lower, a Minister eminently qualified, than one less so. It's sad that no Man fails to expect regard according to his utmost preheminance, and yet few reckon themselves hereby under any greater Capacity for service: They have no respect to that, tho' it be what God did most intend in the inequality of his Gifts.

4. Men are obliged to usefulness in proportion to their respective Capacities for it, and Call unto it.

Were it not so, God would not appear to intend any Glory to himself, or Good to Men, by any thing wherein the greatest excels the vulgar. The instinct in all Men (yea Brutes) which sets the good of the Community above ones private, would be a vain impression, tho' the basest secretly commend it in another. But this
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is written with so bright a Beam, that none can doubt it, without a great reproach to God, the Governor of this World. What must you conceive him to be, that appoints Magistracy, and yet leave the Magistrate at liberty to suffer the innocent Subject to be exposed and injured, the People unreformed and unpreserved? That he should institute the Office of the Ministry, and yet allows the Minister to neglect teaching the Ignorant, awakening the Secure, reproving the Scandalous, opposing the Heretick, comforting the Humble, and edifying the Weak; especially when it's so evident, that performing those several Acts, as the End of these Offices, are so necessary to the benefit of Mankind, (which sufficiently proves the Offices themselves to be so). And it's no less evident that God hath appointed these Offices to those very ends, and annexed his Injunctions that they be so applied and executed, *Rom. 13. 3. Eph. 4. 11, 12.* can then the Officers be unobliged to exert that Authority which the Office conveys, for the good of that people over whom they thereby have power, yea, and claim an honour from?

Men fond of such Trusts, will find they were not conferred as Feathers for their Caps, or gratifications to their Lusts; Heaven's Stamp was not designed to be
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set on poor Clay, to indulge our Pride, Covetousness, love of Dominion, or undue Liberty, but for a Common Good.

As in Offices, so in other vouchsafements God hath a regard to Service; and therefore with a Charge of suitable usefulness it is, that he dispenseth Riches and Gifts, each degree whereof is committed to the Possessors as *Stewards*, to lay them out to the Uses he assigned, nor is it long before you will all be summoned to give an Account of your Stewardship, Luk. 16. 2. then you shall be convinced you were not absolute Proprietors, to reserve, or use at pleasure, one pound of your Estates, nor any degree of your Interest or Gifts, but that a demand of Service increased proportionably to what you did possess.

You may remember I mentioned a Call to Service as well as a Capacity for it, wherein I had respect to what's more peculiar to the Offices of Magistrates and Ministers; and hereby I would prevent a mistake, as if meer Gifts, which fit us for an Office, if we were called to it, did oblige us to do those things which are peculiar to that Office whereto we are not called, which is an Usurpation, whatever usefulness Men pretend. That there be Magistrates God hath enjoined; how they should be Qualified, and their power Executed, he doth also appoint. But which particular

particular Persons shall be Magistrates, and the extent of their Power he hath left to Rules adjusted by the Community whereto they belong; in which respect, the Magistrate is called a Humane Creature, 1 Pet.

2. 13. ἀνθρώπινον κτίσμα.

In like manner, Christ hath Enacted that there be Ministers of the Gospel; their Qualifications, Authority and Work, he hath also described, which he permits not Men to alter or limit. But he hath made other Ministers Judges, whether this or that proposed Man be so Qualified, and being found so to Ordain him; and among them so approved, he hath made Members of the Church the ordinary Electors who shall be *their* more particular Minister, 1 Tim. c. 3. & 4. 14, &c.

Nothing but confusion proceeds from Men's running before they are sent; and ordinarily, as a proud conceit of their own Gifts, puts them out of their own place, where alone God accepts their Service, and they might have been truly useful to the utmost of their Gifts: so a mischief to the Publick, and prejudice to their own Spiritual State, proves at long-run the effect of their Usurpation.

Is it needful to add, that a fit opportunity for real Service is a Call both to accept of an Office tendered, and to every one Invested in an Office, to do those Acts which

which belong thereto? As also, that a fit opportunity is a Call to every Man, to employ for publick benefit, his Riches, Gifts and Interest, according to the place he is in; yea, and very common Danger and Benefit binds us to more Expence and Activity than would be allowable in an ordinary juncture, as *Act. 4. 34. They sold all*, when saving any thing would expose the Christian Cause in its tender beginnings; and this the Civil Weal of a Nation may render as necessary.

5. The tendency of each Man's Actings to usefulness, in his Generation, lies in doing the Work of his Day, for the benefit of others, suitably to the place God hath set him in.

The last Heads stated the degree of Men's Capacities for Service, and Obligation to improve them according to their Call thereto; this head is designed to regulate all Men's Endeavours, so as that a common Good may be subserved thereby. We have an Example, which, if imitated by every Man, would result in the general benefit, *Nehem. c. 3.* Each Man built and repaired the Walls of *Jerusalem*, to his proportion, in his place and order, whereby the whole Work was done for the common Defence, and every Man's particular

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Labour

Labour contributed to that Publick Good, and was found therein. Conformably whereto, a National Good must be promoted, if the Magistrate would attend to the Civil Government, Ministers of the Gospel to Doctrine and the Administration of Worship, and Discipline without corporal Punishments. The Rich, to distribute to publick and private Necessities; the Prudent, to give Advice; Men of Power, to execute well-advised Things; and high and low employed according to their Station, that the common Good suffer not by any of their Neglects or Usurpations. Then indeed the sad Chasmes in the Publick would be made up; new Heavens and a new Earth in a great degree commence. Ambition on the one hand, and Envy on the other, would be much allay'd; For who would exorbitantly seek that which he fore-knows he must use for others rather than enjoy himself? What place for Envy, when I see my self and others better served by every thing wherein another is advanced above me? Alas, how easie is it to commend this, and own its conduciveness to universal Benefit! But the World groaneth under the contrary; every Man throws off the Care, Labour and Charge the Publick is to be served by, and intends little besides Honour and Profit upon the publick Spoil.

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Every Man seeks his own things, Phil. 2. 21. And this to such a degree, that the blindest cannot doubt a Providence, in that the common Good is served even so far as it is; when it is so little designed by most of Men in any station; and that this must be by God's over-ruling the general selfishness to that Good, which in its own Nature (were it not for a Superior Hand) tends to the ruine of the Publick, as such; especially when we find the generality of Men of greatest influence most culpable in that respect, and the residue so unconcerned. O that God would awaken a more Publick Spirit in this Age, when love to God, to his Church, yea to our Country, is so extinguished by carnal selfishness; then every thing whereby each Man is fitted for eminent Service, would be as signally laid out, as the publick Welfare did require. And few Mens Capacities for general Benefit are contracted to one Particular, but multiplied according to the variety of their Talents, Relations, and Opportunities: It follows therefore, that a Man's place for service is commensurate to that variety, and not confined to one, however Eminent it be. To conclude, a tendency to publick service is then greatest when there is a regular Application of every Man's several Office, Relation, and Talent, to the common Good:

Yet all this must be done with a special Regard to that which is the peculiar work of our Day; even that which is principally designed by Providence to be contributed to by our various Abilities. This must not be omitted on the account of any thing more ordinary or easie; for the peculiar work of every Age and Place, hath the highest Consequences to that Age and Place depending on it; by that every Man's Fidelity is most tried; and a mistake in that renders Men most publickly hurtful, as the promoting thereof makes a Man the most beneficial in his Generation. Of this hereafter.

6. He is faithful in his Age, who, uprightly designing to serve God, and his Generation, diligently employs his Talents to promote a common Good, in the greatest Instances of which he is capable.

This is a provision against the Discouragements to which persons, of a low Figure, with honest Minds, are subject: However, let such know, they may be Faithful, tho' not eminently Useful. If what little they can do be uprightly designed, and with a willing Heart performed, it findeth more acceptance with God, than greater things done, from carnal Designs, tho', perhaps, over-ruled by God to further use than they intended. If want
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of Ability be the only restraint, God will Judge us by our large Minds, and not our narrow Power, 2 Cor. 8. 12. A gift of two Mites, when our *All*, is esteemed to be more than greater gifts, when disproportionate to a larger Stock reserved. But then you must be sure, *not to look at your own things, but also at the things of others*, Phil. 2. 4. and cordially employ your little, being you have no more; for he is unfaithful, who, by sloth, or other carnal respects, omits to be useful to his utmost, because he cannot equal the more Eminent; greater Abilities would but more discover the falseness of such a Man. Under the Law, one Lamb was admitted instead of two, but it was *when the Leper was poor, and could not get so much*, Lev. 14. v. 21. but this one Lamb must be brought; so something, yea, the best we can must be performed for God's glory, and a common benefit, or we vainly pretend to Faithfulness; and as vainly, if Idleness or Waste, be the things we indulge to make us capable of doing but so very little. Unusefulness, by incapacity of our own causing, is as culpable as unusefulness when we are capable; nor, deserves he the Name of a good Man, whose Laziness prevents, or Lusts devour, what would qualifie him for eminent service, altho' he do give and act according to what remiss

Labours have gotten, or his Excesses have left still in his hand. Painfulness, and decent Thrift, to enable us to do great things, are most laudable, notwithstanding the silly World's reflections; and he hath the greatest Soul, who despiseth these from a Mind intent on greatest service.

7. The eminently useful Man, in his Generation, is he whose great capacity, for service, is vigorously, constantly, and wisely employed, to do that good which is signally profitable, in the importance, difficulty, and extensiveness thereof, in his Day.

With the Light afforded in the former Heads, this gives you the whole of the Character I proposed to explain.

Here I suppose a Man greatly capable of Service, by Power or Parts, or Estate, with any such other Advantages for usefulness; there remain two things constitutive of this Character, as principally respecting the *Eminency* of this Man's usefulness.

1. The Nature of the Work to which he applieth his Abilities.

2. The manner how he employs his Abilities, in prosecuting what is signally profitable.

1. The

1. The Nature of the Work to which an eminently useful Person employs his Abilities, which this head gives you under various Epithites.

It's that which is a *good Work*, and not sinful; it's a *profitable Work*, not hurtful, or meerly innocent, which is the highest that even the Civiler part of Men do aim at, no, it's what benefits Men. It's *signally profitable*; not in mean, low, and remiss degrees. 1. The signal profitableness thereof is in the *importance* of the good subserved, not what is trivial or inconsiderable, but such as the salvation of Souls, preserving Mens Lives, securing publick Liberties and Peace, supporting the Esteem of useful Persons, vindicating the Oppressed, defending the Truth, and opposing destructive Errors; putting a stop to the attempts of Church-Dividers, propagating a Gospel Ministry, breeding and qualifying Men for eminent Service in Church or State, as young Scholars; and voting for, and procuring the fittest Persons for Offices in Church and State, Employing and Relieving the Poor, &c. And as it's signal in the importance of the Work,

So, 2. in the *difficulty* of it; when it's not easie, but hard, not cheap, but expensive, not safe, but dangerous; when, as oft it falls out, a Man, in the doing of it,

is exposed to great Expences, deep Studies, hard Labour, displeasure of Friends, vilest Reproaches, loss of Estate, Persecution to Imprisonment, Bodily Torments, yea, Death it self. When such things attend our Service, and a good Work cannot be prosecuted with an exemption from such Calamities, it proclaims Endeavours great, and the Man eminently useful; and the rather, because the good end, prosecuted at so dear a rate, will be undertaken by very few, and yet these difficulties manifest it's of greatest concernment that it be pursued, for otherwise Satan, and the corrupt part of Men, would not so oppose. The Apostle's Work was signally useful in this respect, see 1 Cor. 9. 11. Such with all the other Martyrs were eminently useful, in that they endured so much for Witnessing to the Truths, and Instructing and Reforming the World in their Day: Of whom it's justly said, *The World was not worthy*, Heb. 11. 38.

3. But with the difficulty, the extensiveness of this good is greatly to be regarded, as what denotes it important.

This extensiveness regards variety of Benefits, and reacheth to the greater number of Objects. It's not in a few things, nor to a few persons, that eminent usefulness extends; most useful is he who can do
most

most good to most persons (especially influencing ones). He who benefiteth the greatest number of People in whatever may be truly profitable to them, as a means of their Happiness in their Soul, Peace, Health, Plenty, Freedom, Credit, Comfort, and the like, principally in what makes them Happy for ever, next in what contributes to make them safe, easie, and useful in time. And, if besides being profitable to multitudes while we live, we can also serve succeeding Ages, it heightens the Character, *Psal. 79. 13. We will shew forth thy praise to all Generations.*

2. The manner how the Eminently Useful employ their capacities in prosecuting what's signally profitable.

It's not lazily, or remissly, but with vigour; with all his might. Diligence must be great, and the Heart intently engaged in it; as our *τὸ ἔργον* not *παρεργον*, our Business, not Diversion; to spend and to be spent therein, 2 Cor. 12. 15. the Rule is great, Rom. 12. 7, 8, 11. neither must it be seldom, or by fits and starts; not late attempted, or soon deserted, but constantly: Happy is he who begins early, lasts long, and never ceaseth to serve his Generation till God calls him off the Stage. *Blessed is he, whom his Master, when he cometh, finds so doing, Mat. 24. 46.* nor is it to be forgotten

gotten that it must be managed *wisely*, otherwise the useful tendency of great endeavours, well designed, may be lessened, if not defeated. Prudent application of fit and just means, is needful to accomplish so highly a valuable end; of which hereafter.

8. The meer want of proportionable success abates not a Man's eminent usefulness, as to his own Excellency or Benefit, tho' success be greatly desirable, and gratefully to be acknowledged. *Is. 49. 45. I have laboured in vain, and spent my strength for nought, yet is my work with the Lord; and tho' Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord.* This may be applied by every useful Minister.

Events are not in our hands, and therefore it's not by them we shall be Judged or Rewarded; the faithful Labourer is as well pleasing to God, in the pains he took with them that *perish*, as them who *are saved*, 2 Cor. 2. 15, 16. If you have done great things to recover Men, you'll be no loser, tho' Sinners be hardened, or Errors prevail. What tho' Men abuse the Money you bestow, and prove hurtful by the encouragement you have given; what tho' contrary events have followed your just Endeavours; Confusion for Order, Disquiet for Peace, &c. this will lie at the

Door

Door of such who were the culpable Causes of such preposterous Effects, and you'll no more be blamed than the Heavens that dropped Dew on *that Earth which brought forth Briars and Thorns*, Heb. 6. 8.

2. I shall now give an Account of some things requisite to render a Man eminently useful in his Generation, who is capable by his Office, Gifts, or Estate, to be so; wherein I shall have especial regard to Ministers, tho' not only them.

I shall distribute them under three Heads.

1. Such things as are needful to incline them to become intently willing to employ themselves in serving a Common Good. Ability, without a readiness of mind to, and solicitousness for the Honour of God and good of Men, will never make us serviceable. To ingage your Hearts herein, it's necessary.

1. That you have *a believing view of invisible things*. Of God, as he who hath a full Authority over you, to command you to this Work; as he who hath an absolute Propriety in you and yours, and therefore may dispose of you, and all you have, to what Service he pleases; to refuse which is Sacrilege in you, who have dedicated your selves to him. Believe a Judgment-Day, when you must Account

Account for all ; keep sight of Christ, who bought Souls with his Blood, and whom it cost so much to Redeem you for his Service ; be at a certainty about the worth of Souls, your own and others.

And of the dreadful Misery of such who die unconverted, or unfruitful ; realize sinners woful state , when they cry, *Come and help us*, Acts 16. 9. and thy own if thou refusest. Beg Faith of Christ, who is the Author and the Finisher of it: This is that by which unseen things are evident, *Heb. 11. 1.* without which Evidence we lose what must affect and move us in our service to Souls. *Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade Men*, 2 Cor. 5. 11. Every Man's unbelief is equal to his unserviceableness ; and as our Faith is, will our usefulness be.

2. *Love to God and Man* is needful to excite us to Usefulness. This constrains us to express our gratitude to God, who hath done so much for us when miserable ; and to be beneficial to Men, whose Misery we believe and pity. Strong Love will answer all those Excuses which have their rise in Enmity to God and Men ; the remains whereof govern the best Man as far as he is unprofitable. By this Divine Passion poor Endeavours will be disdained, and the most expensive be no cause of regret ;

gret; yea, a pleasure riseth with the height of the performance; and God's inclining us to do so much, becomes the very Matter of our Praises to him; as *1 Chron. 29. 14, 15.* Keep then this holy Fire blazing, it will always point you work, and find you strength to do it. Nay, it will put you to pain, whiles unemployed, and make you solicitous that it be to purpose. This, this was it put *Paul in travel, till Christ was formed in those, Gal. 4. 19.*

3. *A Publick Spirit* is also needful to the same End.

This is the immediate effect of Love; it's the Heart dilated by it. This is the next Spring that sets all the Wheels in motion, which otherwise stand still within the Precincts of narrow self. How became *David* such a publick Blessing he tells you, *Psalms 137. 6. If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief Joy, let my right-hand forget her cunning.* The vastest Stock is productive of little in that Man's Hand who is all for himself; whether self in his own Person, or self in his Family, yea, or self in his own Party and Faction.

But a *Publick Spirit* will be contriving and aiming at a common Benefit above his own; in this will such a one delight, and this he must pursue, because it moves as a common Soul related to, and concerned in

in all Men, well knowing God hath an interest in each, and ones self to be but a small part of the whole, and therefore to be less regarded than that wherein Gods glory is infinitely more displayed, and from which a so far greater Tribute of Honour and Service will redound. Therefore be earnest with God to enlarge thy Heart, and bring it more under the power of that Relation wherein thou standest to the Catholick Church, yea, to all Men, otherwise thou wilt be apt, with *Cain*, to say of thy very Brother, *Am I his Keeper?* Gen. 4. 9. Own thy self, with *St. Paul*, a Debtor both to the Greeks and to the Jews, to the Wise, and to the Unwise, Rom. 1. 14. A narrow Spirit is a common Plague, abhor and deprecate it as Unchristian and Inhumane; while it prevails, I can hardly hope thou canst get to Heaven, but all may freely say, it's no matter how soon it be that thou wert there. Look at Christ, who made himself Poor that he might make many Rich, 2 Cor. 8. 9. and blush that thou wearest his Name, whiles thy Money Rusts, and so many Poor do starve. But happy is that Publick Spirit, that can scarce relish his own Felicity, when he sees so many Miserable, but is bound with them that are in bonds, Heb. 13. 3. by this Spirit a Man is bent for God, and a Publick Good, and without it all beyond self,
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(in that cursed self) is as nothing to him, a meer *Galio*, caring for neither God, nor Souls, Church nor State. You see, that to encline you to Eminent Usefulness, you must get, improve, and exercise Faith and Love with a Publick Spirit; these will employ your Abilities for service.

2. If you would be eminently Useful, you must get such things as will fix and relieve you against those Difficulties which attend eminent Usefulness. Good Inclinations and Resolves will be tried in a course of publick Service; and as the Trials will be different, our Preservatives and Supports should be as various. Indeed, Faith, Love, and a publick Spirit, which excite a Man to great Attempts for a publick Good, do also yield Relief against discouragement in the prosecution of them. Yea, Faith derives supporting Strength from Christ, as he is our Head of Influence as well as Conduct. But, besides these.

1. *Be truly humble.* The proud Heart will scorn to stoop to many things which Publick Service requires; nor endure the Debasements which it will expose to, and so the Work will be half done at first, and forsaken at last, as too grating on a proud Spirit, which formeth Projects more agreeable to an aspiring Mind. But, if you are
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cloathed with Humility, you'll be fitted to stoop cheerfully to what ever your Work calls you to condescend, and with easiness of Mind to endure the Contempt which you'll meet with from such you design to be useful to. Can you, without great Humility, use such plain Words as the Ignorant understand, inculcate the same thing often, admit a familiar Freedom to the Poor and Mean, go into nasty Cottages, hear much Weakness and Nonsense, without discouraging the Silly from saying any more? Can you, and not be humble, *become all things to all Men, that you may win some, and be a Servant to all that you may gain the more?* 1 Cor. 9. 19, 21. Yea, you may meet with Affronts and Scorns, with Slanders and Reproach, from the very poor whom you endeavour to benefit in Soul and Body too; Pride will soon disdain all such Work, but so must not you, unless you cease to be a Publick Blessing. Be humble, *i. e.* look at your selves, vile Dust and Ashes, as bad by Nature as the most wicked you would Reform, and worthy to be as poor as the most Indigent you relieve, and not too good to be employed by your Redeemer in the meanest Services, but greatly honoured to be used in such as this. When Pride stirs, and this seems hard Work, as too debasing, ask, may not *that* ~~be~~ better fit me, *which was in*
Christ

Christ Jesus my Lord, who made himself of no reputation, Phil. 2. 5.

2. *Be weaned from the World, mortified to all in it, and well content with what God hath reserved in Heaven for you ; what you make your Portion, that will prescribe your Work. If your Happiness is confined to Flesh and Time, you'll soon quit what seldom contributes to it, and is daily exposing it to hazard, yea, oft to ruine. Even Publick Spirited Men, for their Country, venture all in common Danger, yet, after Success, they get the least ; it's oft more than so with Men who are engaged for the Testimony of Christ, and good of Souls: Worldly Affections can never drive this Trade ; Covetousness, Effeminateness, fondness of Relations, excessive love of Life, Ease and Pleasure, will obstruct you, when the Expences, Losses, Pains and Dangers of Eminent Undertakings, present themselves.*

Therefore be Crucified to the World, if ever you would be Useful in it ; and let it be a dead Carkass in your Account, if you would not be hindred by it in your best Designs. Cherish Heavenly Affections, and with pleasure oft view your chosen Portion, otherwise an irregular Appetite will press too hard, to let you be much or long engaged in a Work that's so far from
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gratifying it. This way *Moses* became so profitable to his People, *Heb. 11. 25, 26.* and *Paul* to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, *2 Cor. 5. 12, 15, 18.*

3. *Get true Christian Fortitude:* And this will unite, fix and steel the Heart against all Onsets which try your Patience, Courage and Resolutions, *Rev. 2. 3.* A pusillanimous Man will refuse what's difficult, and forsake what's dangerous; or, so demean himself under it, as to frustrate a good Effect. The truest Courage will be put to a stand, for Satan singlerh out the eminently Useful, to level all his Darts against; his own Votaries he'll employ to persecute them; whatever in civil Men is to be made use of shall conspire to make your Work difficult, and you unhappy and uneasie; nothing shall be wanting to terrifie or bribe you, to tire or distress you, *Rev. 2. 10.*

2. Envy also still accompanieth signal usefulness, which oft renders your Friends more grievous to you than your professed Enemies. In every Age it's found, *the spirit within us lusteth to envy*, *Jam. 4. 5.* I wish all good Men, yea, we Ministers, could also find with the Apostle; *but God giveth more grace:* Yet as unreasonable and devilish as Envy is, you must expect it, and be

be prepared to endure the Effects thereof, but still with a Mind no more averſe from your Work, or indifferent to it; other than avoid all Oſtentation, to conceal what of your Work you can, and to but omit none, unleſs you can get it done by another hand.

3. If you are called to ſerve your Generation, by oppoſing the Errors, or Church-dividing Practices, of any conſiderable Sects, pretending to Zeal for Truth, (tho' never ſo falſly) and to a purer Form of Adminiſtration, (tho' in all that highly Superſtitious) you'll find thoſe violent and baſe Methods to aſperſe and ſink you, which very Pagans would abhor to uſe; yet this muſt not abate your Teſtimony, nor incline you in the leaſt to betray the Truth, or to ſeem to approve of their Un-chriſtian Attempts againſt the Common Good; neither ſuffer your Spirit to be infected and debaſed, to a reſemblance of theirs, in Malice, Rancour, Wrath, Rage, or Revengefulneſs, which is ſo contrary to the Spirit of Chriſt, as to make you juſtly ſuſpect you were no appointed Advocate for his Truth and Intereſt. And alike careful muſt you be, that the higheſt provocations prevail not with you, to vindicate your ſelf by ways that (all things duly conſidered) appear a greater damage to the Publick Good, than the ſingle Intereſt of your Perſon can countervail.

I have given you some hints of the Exercise which you ought to provide against, lest a surprize cause you to quit, or disserve the Blessed Work you are called to.

4. Yet, it's true, it may prove more creditable, safe and easie, if it be only beneficial to Men's Bodies or Estates, for against that sort, Satan and the World make less resistance, unless it affect the Publick in somewhat wherein Factions are concerned. Yea, it may be less hazardous and grievous, if it profit Mens Souls, if it be only in points which Christ hath gained a reputation to, and that you have many to assist you in the Defence of, especially if your motion be but equal with those many, because such things are familiarized, or have obtained a greater interest in the Consciences of Men, and the remaining Stream of Opposition is divided.

5. But the most eminent Usefulness is much determined to those points which are difficult as still deciding, and wherein the Interest of Christ, in your Day and Place, is the subject of a present Contest between Christ with his Instruments on the one side, and Satan with his on the other. In such cases there will be great opposition, as far as Satan can influence any,

any, either by their Ignorance, Malignity worldly Considerations, Pride, or Custom, &c. And generally the Contenders on Christ's part are at first but few, especially the more eminent ones; and therefore it necessarily follows that such must be exposed. It were easie to instance all this in the case of introducing the Gospel where it was not before, in the reformation of Worship or Discipline, where they have been corrupted, in opposing and detecting false Doctrines which many have imbibed, and long entertained; in reclaiming a degenerate People from evil practices much indulged; in resisting incroaching Errors and Disorders, abetted by a considerable Number of great Zealots, especially if they have some plausible Pretensions, suited to the disposition of sober ignorant People; and that some more than common Spirit and Fervour do attend the Seducers, which is very usual. But this is less needful, having cautioned you as to the Snares, and fore-warned you of the Danger.

6. Therefore may not I with reason ask you? Can a feble Mind, or unfortified Heart, persist in great Endeavours, and in the face of such Difficulties steadily pursue his glorious End? No; he must succumb, and will quit the plainest and most

important Truth or Duty. The Interest of Christ will say of these as in *Paul's* case; *No Man stood with me, all (these) Men forsook me*, 2 Tim. 4. 16. Therefore watch against all declinings in holy Christian Courage (meerly natural will not serve, tho' it's a good preparative,) pray with hope for renewed Vigour, that you may find, as *Psalms* 69. 32. *your Heart shall live that seek God*; and that *he is the strength of your Heart*, when all else fails you, *Psalms* 73. 26. When the Onset is vigorous, and begins to impress, be then *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, Eph. 6. 10. To that End, remember whose Cause you plead, and who employs you: Read oft your Commission, where you will find a promise fit to revive your very fainting Spirit, *Matth.* 28. 20. *Lo, I am with you to the end of the World.* One less faithful and compassionate than our Saviour is (if possessed of Power) would not suffer any Servant he employed to sink, in a Business wherein himself hath the greatest concernment. If your Hearts be upright, and you have God's Work in hand the more eminently you are employed the greater Supports you'll find; and in the most difficult Enterprize he is careful to give the greatest assurance, *Jer.* 1. 7, 8, 18. *Ezek.* 3. 8, 9. One promise he can so spirit and fill with Power, that it shall
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set thy Soul above all Fears; and cause Strength to advance to thy own feeling in very extremity, above what it appeared in the easiest of thy ways: Trust then in him with thy whole Heart. And because what repels our Fears tends to encourage us, it's not improper oft seriously to think what far greater mischiefs we escape, by not drawing back, or doing the work of the Lord deceitfully, than what can attend a faithful discharge of our work, which hath so great a reward when finished, *Heb. 10. 38. Rev. 3. 5.*

Herewith I have finished an Account of what's necessary to support us under the Difficulties attending publick Usefulness, *viz.* Humility, mortifiedness to the World, and Christian Fortitude.

3. Several things are needful as tending to secure, or at least facilitate the success of your Work persisted in.

Herein we should be solicitous that, as much as in us lies, the End we propose may not be defeated, but that those receive that profit, which we sincerely conduce to, by our Endeavours; whereby we may eventually prove Blessings to them. To this End,

1. You must duly address your selves to God, to engage his Help. Be much in

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Prayer to, and dependance on God through Christ our Mediator. Look to him for Direction, that you may not mistake your Work, nor the best way to perform it : Seek to him for abundant Anointings, that you may not be unqualified in proportion to your Undertaking. His constant Assistance and Blessing must be fervently implored, *Neh. i. 11.* without which your most probable Attempts will be vain, yea turn to your reproach and shame. And that you may be in the likelier posture for a gracious Return, keep all clear between God and your own Consciences ; regard no iniquity in your heart, *Psal. 66. 18.* Rely on Christ's Merits and Intercession ; and be always ready to ascribe to God the entire Glory of all your serviceableness and success ; for he is a jealous God, and generally blasteth that wherein he is not acknowledged ; we must make God all in all, if we would signifie any thing.

2. Be careful of your own Behaviour before those to whom you endeavour to be profitable ; that it conduce to, and do not hinder your Usefulness. Prevent all Prejudices, gain their Affection and Esteem ; possess them with a sense of your Kindness to them, good Designs towards them, and your own Belief of, and earnestness of Soul for the matters you call them to entertain
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and submit to; exercise great Patience, Meekness and Tenderness; and see that your whole Behaviour be circumspect, and your Life exemplary, 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. that they may find no just Exception against your Doctrine or Endeavours. If they take occasion unjustly, or that by wicked persons you are falsely slandered, you may better hope, God will prevent the unprofitableness of your Labours, or at least accept them: Neither is it unfit to be cautious how you dispute with them concerning Secular Interests; avoid also fondness of External Respect; and yet be as jealous that you forfeit not an Internal Reverence, nor prostitute your Authority, as you are Christ's Embassadors, *Rom.* 11. 13, 14.

3. Labour to attain and use true Wisdom in the ordering of your Endeavours, that they may be apt to real Publick Usefulness.

1. I call it *true* Wisdom, not only to oppose it to Folly and Indiscretion, but also to all Knavish Craftiness. God's Cause needs no base Tricks; upright Men abhor the use of them: Christ seldom prospereth such to serve his Interest, but if he over-rule them to any common Good, as sometimes he doth other pieces of Wick- edness, yet he will never justifie or accept
such

such Methods, but condemn those ways, and them who use them. But indeed, as base Tricks consist not with sincere Designs of a Publick Good, so they are never used with that intention. No, no, let Men's pretences be never so sacred, it's to serve a carnal selfish turn, to propagate or uphold some private Faction, in opposition to the true Extensive Interests of Christ in the World. The eminently Useful could not die in peace, if they must not say with the Apostle ; *Our rejoycing is this, the Testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World,* 2 Cor. 1. 12. They were wiser than to think, that will be accounted a service to Christ in life, for which, without Repentance, he will cast them into Hell at their death. This Text may assure us, that *Paul's Guile with which he caught these very People,* 2 Cor. 12. 16. was not any thing contrary to godly Sincerity which in this Epistle the fore-cited place he had with more than usual care instanced towards them ; it was therefore no other than honest Wisdom, or godly Prudence ; even that which I have said is so needful to advantage the Success of your well designed Labour ; it was an instance of his Self-denial, not his Self seeking : He used his sparing their Purse as a help to
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save their Souls, upon finding their Temper such, that the Gospel was like to be less profitable to them, if he subsisted by it. This was far enough from any misrepresenting, and undermining, cheating, dividing, imposing, ensnaring, and intangling Arts or Methods; ways so abominable in the most ordinary Affairs between Man and Man, that you should tremble at a thought of using them in matters enstamped with the Name of God; yea, tho' it were but in defending a Publick Good, and your self from the dangerous attempts of such as practise them.

2. Yet true Wisdom and Prudence be very needful, to direct your just Endeavours in the greatest aptness to succeed with all those whom you design to benefit. A true Judgment of Persons and Seasons, with adirect regard to the End, and an exquisite understanding of the nature of the various lawful Means, will qualifie you to chuse the fittest Means to that End with those Persons. God's Word, Prayer, Consideration and Experience must be your helps to arrive to Wisdom, and be sure to exercise and apply to all your Endeavours the utmost Wisdom God vouchsafes you, a neglect whereof will aggravate your disappointment, as well as conduce thereto.

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But my chief design under this Head is, to convince you of the necessity of Wisdom in the whole course of Publick Usefulness, that so you may become more earnest with God for this, & careful to excite your Souls to the constant exercise of it. Without Wisdom you cannot rightly judge of the work of your Generation; a mistake wherein is dangerous to your great End; it's so, tho' it should be no other mistake than to overlook one of the more principal parts of it, and take up with what is next to it, as plainer, easier or safer; yea, if it lies in several things, and you neglect but the least. How needful is Wisdom to discern which is our present Duty, and what the greatest Good, when several appear in competition? yea often there's need of exquisite Skill in an Affair of Publick consequence to determine but what will do more good than hurt. He hath not well observed, that thinks it always easie to judge what's the most proper Duty in each Company, and wherein they need most to be benefited, especially the fittest Seasons, Opportunities and Methods to apply suitable Means to effect that Good which they severally stand in greatest need of, and are most capable of receiving. It's hard to accommodate your selves to the various tempers and circumstances of your very Acquaintance, and know whom,
when

when, and how to Reprove, Encourage, Examine, Exhort or Relieve, so as to be most beneficial to each within the limits of your power, and according to your different obligations, tho' to the extent of it.

Great discretion is necessary to judge of Obstacles, and to demean your selves under them, as may most conduce to your Publick Usefulness; to know when, and how to strive to remove or oppose them, when it's best to connive and be silent. How to avoid the Imputation of Rashness and foolish Zeal in the former, and of Luke-warmness and Cowardize in the latter; for Publick Usefulness will be affected by both.

In like manner there is use of Wisdom towards such as drive on the same good design with you, as well as towards them who oppose; if you are younger, that the elder may not by Envy or Suspicion, be tempted to divert you from your work, or give you disquiet in it: To avoid which *serve with them in humility, as Sons with a Father, Phil. 2. 22.* If you be elder, that the younger's rashness, unfixedness, and less experience give not Satan an advantage; to prevent which, do not discourage or despise, but assist and countenance them. But be they inferiors, equals or superiors, who do contribute to a common good: He that will be eminently useful, and give up him-

self to it, had need of greatest Wisdom to govern himself towards each ; for, a little acquaintance with the World, will discover in most men so much of either humour, pride, envy, selfishness, covetousness, suspicion, cowardliness, unconcernedness for the Publick, unfixedness, sloth, ignorance, credulousness, or aptness to be imposed on by designing men ; as will force the observing to fix this Conclusion, and govern themselves by it.

They that will be most useful in their Generation, must spend, do, adventure and suffer most, and yet must resolve to allow, intreat, connive, yield, thank, forbear, forgive, deny themselves, and endure most, whatever persons they have to deal with ; and thus make the best use of all for a common good.

Who is sufficient for these things ? but with thee, O Lord (who employest whom thou wilt) nothing is impossible. A stammering *Moses*, a suspicious *Gideon*, a childish *Jeremiah*, did succeed in that whereto thou didst appoint them. Surely by all this you are induced to seek earnestly for Wisdom. Ask it daily of God through Christ, who giveth liberally (for direction to do as well as suffer) and upbraideth not, James 1. 5. dependingly hope ; He will guide me by his Counsel, and afterwards bring me to Glory, Psal. 73. 24.

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I have finished the second general Head, viz. an account of what's needful to bring a man to eminent Usefulness, who is capable of it; under which you have heard, that his Soul must be excited to undertake it by Faith, Love, and a Publick Spirit. 2. Be relieved against the Difficulties attending it, which is by Humility, Mortifiedness to the World, and Christian Fortitude. 3. He must facilitate his Success by Prayer to God, a due behaviour before Men, and true Wisdom in the management of all his Endeavours.

3. I shall evidence the Excellency of this Character. To be an eminently Useful Man, is no empty Title without real worth. God approves of it, Angels and good Men highly esteem it; yea, there's that in every man, which now secretly, and in time will publickly allow this man to be the best, the wisest, and the greatest.

Eminent Usefulness greatly differeth from its Counterfeits. This is no pragmatical business in other men's matters; but a faithful discharge of our Obligations to God and our fellow Creatures.

Neither is it a Pharisaical *Proselyting* to a Sect, which doth narrow and weaken Christ's Interest (proving oft as fatal to the Church, yea to Men's selves, as their walking at large in the World would be)

be) no, it's an intentness to promote mere Christianity, and unaffected Godliness, which reforms the World, edifies the Church, and saves the Souls of Sinners in proportion to its success. It's what advanceth Men above the Rank of ordinary Christians, who are Babes to these grown Men, Shrubs to these Cedars, very cyphers (if not blemishes and burthens) compared with these Men of Name, these common Blessings, these Witnesses to a Divine Life, and Ornaments of Religion, who bear up the Pillars of the Church, yea of the Earth; to each of whom we Weaklings may say as they to *David*, *Thou art worth 10000 of us*. This will appear, if you consider,

1. It's an extraordinary honour to be singled out by God eminently to serve our Generation. What can be more glorious than to be singled out, as *David*, from among his Brethren, to effect God's benign purposes to multitudes, when most Men are useles, yea hurtful; their Names are registred among the *Worthies* of *Israel*, and famous in *Bethlehem*, *Ruth* 4. 11. This is that *Moses*, *Acts* 7. 37. Being publick Blessings, they with *Jabez*, are more honourable than their Brethren, *1 Chron.* 4. 9. No Office reflects honour but with respect to that usefulness to which it obligeth, and or which it capacitates.

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2. It argues a most God-like and Excellent Spirit; *He is good, and doth good, Psal. 119. 68.* He is *καλὸν ἀγαθόν*, which was visibly instanced in our Lord Jesus; *He went about doing good, Acts 10. 38.* to Souls and Bodies; in whom is this so exemplified as in the signally useful? whose activity, fixedness, labours, designs and beneficence correspond to Christ's, allowing for our contracted Capacities. In such a Man many Graces and Virtues are associated, nay which can be wanting, yea or weak in the Constitution of this Person? he also must be greatly cleansed from those dregs, which debase, divert and deaden the less useful. He seems to breath in another Air, to be of another make, and governed by contrary Inclinations and Rules than most of Mankind be (I had like to have said Christians) hence he is too often branded as less prudent, because he walks by Rules so much above what poor and narrow Souls embrace; and postponeth those things beyond which a vulgar spirit cannot derive a Motive. Let us remark a few Scripture Instances, lest all appears a meer speculation; behold Queen *Esther* taking her Life in her hand to save her People; did not she then love her People above her Life? *Esth. 4. 16.* *Moses* neglected God's Offer to advance his Family, and intercedeth for the Nations safety, as if he had hated his
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own house, *Numb.* 14. 12, 17. What Dominion over Covetousness, Selfishness and Cowardice did *Nehemiab* manifest, whiles by acting their contraries he repaired *Jerusalem*, established God's Worship among the Captives restored by his means: Without ostentation he might say, *Should such a one as I flie?* *Neh.* 6. 11. *Mordecais* mind was well ballasted, that under such Advancement retained such Goodness, and Meekness, as still to seek the Weal of his People, and speak Peace to all his Seed, *Esth.* 10. 3. How could *Caleb* and *Joshua* refuse to frame their Account to the Humour of the Multitudes, but that that they had a more Excellent Spirit than the other Spies? *Numb.* 14. 24. Oh the magnanimity, zeal for God, love to Souls, contempt of the World, and unwearied vigour and largeness of heart which governed *Paul* to his extensive Usefulness! which might be instanced in the other Apostles and Martyrs; yea those illustriously shine in every eminently useful Christian: It's the excellency of their Spirit which forms such vast Designs, and enables to the unwearied pursuits thereof: Divine Influence inspires them, and keeps their Minds above what's mean and selfish, beyond what's narrow and sordid, yea so widens and enflames them, that their Spheres prescribe the only Limit to their Attempts;

Attempts; how far would they relieve, reform and improve the Church, the Nation, yea the World, were it but in their power? Judge the Spirit by the use others make of the same Abilities, how useless, how hurtful?

3. The eminently Useful have more manifest grounds for a comfortable Death than others can expect. Death makes a great discovery of the true Value of things; whatever renders this safe and easie, we ought highly to esteem, as Men assured it's our Passage into Eternity, and puts a period to our Preparations for it. *In the grave there's no work nor device to change our State, or improve our Meetness for an unseen World, Eccles. 9. 10.* Therefore whatever is the best Evidence of our Title to Eternal Life, and the greatest Meetness for it, that must afford ground of highest Comfort, when Self-love, and the nearness of Eternity gives Death an awakening power.

1. I shall prefix a Caution.
2. Prove what I assert.

1. For Caution. The Mistakes of weakly designing Men, necessitate me to acquaint you, it's Christ only who *procured* a safe and comfortable Death, by meriting our Pardon, and a Right to Eternal Glory,

with a happy Resurrection. It's by *Faith* only, that a Regenerate Penitent looks to rely on, and receives Christ as our Atoning Saviour for Pardon and Life, according to his Promises in the Gospel, which Promises, with the included Benefits, are purchased only by Christ's Obedience, and applied as an Effect thereof, whenever they are applied. The Qualifications which the Gospel appoints in him whom the Promises invest in its Benefits, are no causes of those Benefits, nor any part of the Righteousness which procured them. But Christ using his Gospel as an Instrument in the Governing and Saving of Sinners, and pleading with them his purchased Benefits for Motives to their Obedience to the Gospel, as a Rule of Judgment. It's not sufficient to our comfortable Death, that we believe that Christ obeyed and died to procure Pardon, and a Right to Salvation for Penitent Believers; but it must appear to us, that we are partakers of that Pardon and Right to Life, which must be by the Evidence of our Regeneration, Repentance and Faith; not one without the other; nor either (when we come to die) without their genuine necessary Effects, and each persevered in. Vain hopes if we totally want whatever the Gospel Promises make indispensably needful to our obtaining Eternal Glory; and the contrary whereto

whereto the Gospel threatneth with an Exclusion from Heaven, *John* 3. 3, 36. *Lnke* 13. 3. *Heb.* 12. 14. *cap.* 10. 38. He is fool hardy, that dares die, not knowing but that his Faith was the Faith of an unregenerate impenitent heart; yea, or satisfies himself with having thought he once at first had such a true Faith; but is not sure that he persevereth therein, that regards not any conformity to Christ. Universal Obedience, sincere Holiness, and Fidelity to God, and Improvements of his Talents, all which the Gospel so insists on, as being fitter to give evidence, than things more obscure or remote can be *Mat.* 10 33. and 25. 30. 2 *Cor.* 13. 5. *Ephes.* 5. 6.

2. I shall prove that the eminently Useful, have more manifest grounds for a comfortable Death than others can expect; for which end, it will be sufficient that I evidence. This eminent faithful usefulness is a most plain and infalible Evidence of our Title to Eternal Life, and it also argueth a very great meetness for Heaven; whence it will follow, that the eminently faithful useful Man, hath more manifest grounds for a comfortable Death than others can expect, and consequently, his Character is Excellent. It tends to a comfortable Death; as,

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1. It is a most plain and infallible Evidence of our Title to Eternal Life. Faithful eminent usefulness, is not only an evidence considered abstractedly, but it gives evidence to the sincerity of all, or most other Graces; yea, and receives it from them, for by the in-being and activity of such Graces it subsisted, and in it each of them expressed their vital power and sincerity, and that not darkly, but clearly, not doubtfully but to full conviction; so that the eminently useful Man, hath the concurrent Testimony of every Grace, in a light to which each contributes. And it answers any just challenge that can be made to his having those several Graces, and that in reality; so that if Faith, Repentance, love to God, a new Birth, or Perseverance, have Life promised to them, and the sincerity thereof being evident to a Man, must yield strong consolation: then the eminently useful Man hath very abundant reasons of Comfort, as to his interest in Eternal Life. I shall evidence this by three things

1. Can he doubt the Truth of his several Graces? Not of his *Faith*, because he hath been thus signally excited by his *assent*, to what Christ, as *Prophet*, hath revealed: and encouraged, by *trusting* in his *Saviours* Merits, Strength, & Testament: and govern-
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ed by the commands of Chriſt his *received Lord*, and that in ſo faithful an Execution of his own Covenant *Conſent* and Vows? yea, his Union to Chriſt, is attested as well as his Faith by which he is united, for his truly devoted fruitful life, could proceed from, and ſubſiſt by nothing lower, than thoſe Vital influences and ſupplies which came from Chriſt his Head and Root, *Gal. 2. 20. Phil. 1. 19. 20, 21.*

His *Repentance* alſo is unſuſpected, when he beholds his Luſts ſo *ſubdued* as not to hinder his living to God entirely as his end; his Heart ſo *altered* in its purpoſes, reſolves and reliſhes, that he could not live to carnal ſelf, but a common good, wherein he delighted and ſpent himſelf. He knows his former evil courſe is duly *bewailed* when ſo directly changed, and that ſin was truly *hateful*, being he hath not only endeavoured the utter Mortification of it in himſelf, but greatly laboured to reſcue all others from the dominion and effects thereof.

He is ſure of his *new Birth*, when he reflects that nothing leſs could make my aims, my temper, and courſe, to be ſo far conformed to Chriſt's, as my devotedneſs to God's glory, and to the benefit of Saints and Sinners doth attest, *1 Joh. 4. 17.* Yea, more a lower Principle than what was formed in Regeneration, would never

have lasted thus long, and carried me thus far, *Joh. 4. 14.*

2. This eminently useful Man's stated course and contrivances, repel a Jealousie, that his love to God or Man: or appearing Zeal, was a *painted* Fire; his Faith, Hope, or other Graces, a *dead* Image, because all these have vitally concurred, to direct, fix, and strengthen his Labours, to lay out his Talents, drive a constant Trade, and spend his life for Christ, *Joh. 14. 21. 1 Joh. 3. v. 16, 17. Rom. 12. 11, 12, 13.* And there is as little ground to question his *Perseverance*, when he knows he was not taken off from publick serviceableness, by his sloth, fear, weariness, selfishness, or change of purpose or designs; yea, that now he feels his Soul solicitous for, and prepared unto a publick good, were he but capable to contribute to it.

3. Besides this Testimony, from the evidence, of such Graces as Life is promised to the useful Man, is in a way likelier for comfort than others, because the spirit of God doth not usually forbear to cast a light upon the Graces of such when they come to die, but (and that not rarely) he makes them to behold his face, and experience some foretastes of the approaching Glory; so that with *Moses* they die at the
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Mouth of God, with *Stephen, Act. 7. 57.* as *David, 2 Sam. 23. 5.* Yea, besides this, the useful Man is encouraged by the great things that passed between God and his Soul, in bending him for, and carrying him through those Attempts and Employments wherein he hath served the Will of God in his Generation; many Answers of Prayer, eminent Deliverances from Evil, Supports when Fainting, Revivings and Enlargements when tempted to Remissness, frequent views of Christ and Heaven for renewal of Strength, (and the like) which he hath oft experienced, have so familiarized God and Christ to him, and so fixed his Trust in his Goodness, Truth and Word, that he can quietly commit his Spirit to him. And so, from all put together, having *now fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the faith, he beholds that Crown of Righteousness hanging over his head, which he knows his God will give him, 2 Tim. 4. 8.* and he hath *an abundant entrance into God's Kingdom, 2 Pet. 1. 11.*

2. This eminent Usefulness argues a meetness for Heaven. He can easily quit all worldly Enjoyments, who valued Life it self but as a means for service, and consecrated all he had as subservient to it. This Man is not called off before his Work be done, for *his course is finished, and the*

the end of his being on Earth so fully answered, *Acts* 13. 25. Heaven must be a real *Rest* to him after so much Labour, and very *suitable* in the nature of it, to one of so agreeable a disposition. What welcome Company are *perfected* happy Souls, when the contrary made the saving and healing of miserable Sinners to engage his Thoughts, and command his Strength whiles he lived on Earth. His Soul that was so enlarged by Grace for publick Use, will be very *receptive* of those fuller Streams of heavenly Joys.

How will he be *satisfied* with more of *God's likeness* there, when it will be but the perfection of what he judged so lovely as to strive so much to propagate it here? *Psalms* 17. 14, 15. This Publick Spirit will be ravished in contemplating and adoring a blessed God, when he beholds how *universal a Good* he is; yea, and ever hath been, by the Records of his Beneficence there published and explained; whatever Employment Heaven allots (for it's no place of idleness) he is greatly prepared for it; who did heartily perform so much under the great disadvantages of this present state, which did arise both from his Works and himself, yea, and such as he had to deal with. So that this man is gathered when ripe; he is even here a *Vessel of Glory, being so meet for his Masters use*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 21. Now

Now how comfortable will Death be to a Man thus well *assured* of eternal Happiness, and *prepared* for that wherein it will consist ? It cannot endanger nor hurt him ; he must rather desire than abhor or fear it, when only a sense of present serviceableness (where it is more needful) hath reconciled useful Saints to a longer Life, *Phil. 1. 23, 24.*

To such useful ones as *Paul* it belonged to triumph over Death, rather than be afraid, and welcome its approaches, to enjoy that a regard whereto had made him so laborious, *1 Cor. 15. 57, 58.*

Thus I have represented the Grounds on which a very useful Man may die comfortably. But, can there be the like for an unuseful Person ? I am sure, where a Life unprofitably spent (through sloth, negligence, self-seeking, and unfaithfulness to God,) doth stare a Man in the Face, it's a just challenge to his Hopes, it justifies his Fears, and he vainly expects Advantage by Death, or Safety in dying.

Yea, a Man who hath been Useful in lesser degrees, through remissness and narrowness of Heart, cannot but feel greater jealousy of his Condition than the eminently Useful ; yea, he must make bitter reflections upon his past Life, wherein he finds so many neglects and baulks. So little Work done in so long a time,
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and with so great a Stock ; and being self-conscious of the much greater Things he might have performed for a common Good ; sure he cannot, without grief, behold his season over, whiles the Blood of Souls, the Groans of a dying Church, or a sinking Nation, testifie against his departing Soul, that omitted relieving them to his Power. What work for Shame, and Sorrow, ay, and Fears too, will this make, compared with a vigorously useful Life ?

4. The future Rewards of an eminently useful Man will be greater than others : His Crown will weigh in proportion to his service : *They that turn many, shall shine as the Stars in the Firmament, for ever and ever.* Dan. 12. 3. He that gained the ten Talents, was made *a Ruler over ten Cities* ; he that gained two, was made Ruler but over five, *Luke 19. 17.*

These wider Vessels shall be filled as well as the lesser ; but, being larger, they contain the more. O, then happy he who was most abundant in Labours ; no degree whereof *shall be in vain*, 1 Cor. 15. 58. Gal. 6. 9, 10. Their Works shall follow them as a Retinue, adding to their Grandeur ; and Rivers shall be more acknowledged by our blessed God, when he will come to reward the very Drops.

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These Mens Place in the Body will be more Noble, their Thrones higher, perhaps, their Services more Eminent in a heavenly Estate, as much in proportion as they had been on Earth. And tho' all faithful Ones *shall be as Angels*, Luke 20. v. 3. Yet among these there are Degrees, wherein there will be a correspondence as to those.

Every generous Design, Tear, Labour, Hardship, Expence, Loss, and Hazard, will be found in a proportioned Glory: *He that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully* 2 Cor. 9. 6.

Whence it's easily inferred how excellent a Character of a Believer it is, that he was an eminently useful Person in his Age; it's a Title will found in the very Heavens, and be honourably acknowledged by Christ upon his Throne, he will say, *Well done, thou good and faithful Servant, enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord*, Mat. 25. 21. Which yet is no reflection on his own Merits; for in the Vertue thereof the most useful Saints inherit those further additions, according to his Promise, as well as the less Useful possess the lesser degrees. True, *it's all his own*, and he *may do what he will with his own*; but, if he is pleased to foretell us how he'll dispence this *his own* to Men, thereupon his Veracity commands our assured expectations; and

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and if he also use those *higher* Measures of Glory, as Motives to *greater* Labours, we, in being *very* Laborious, cannot be disappointed of those higher Measures any more than of the least; yea, we frustrate his End in publishing such Promises; if we are not excited to more abundant Labours by the Benefits promised, and upon such Labours expect those Benefits.

I have offered what I hope will convince you of the Truth of the Third general Head, *viz.* That to be eminently Useful in ones Generation, is an excellent Character; for to be so employed, is an Honour put upon that Man by the infinite God. The Spirit of such a Man is Excellent and God-like, he hath the greatest Grounds for a comfortable Death, both from the evidence of his Title to eternal Life, and his meekness for it. And last, his future Glory will be greater than that of others.

I shall proceed to the Application of this Doctrine by some Inferences.

i. *Inference.* To be a publick Plague, is a great reproach; what can be said worse of a Man when dead? That one did no Good in an eminent Station; that he hid his Talent, which should have been employed

ployed in view, are infamous Scars; but that any Man should influence to publick Mischief, this leaves his Memorial accursed; better never have been born; his Gifts, his Estate, Powers and Offices, are become a Snare to himself, and a Mischief to the Publick. The more active, the greater detriment; the longer he lived, the more lasting Curse hath this Man been; and the further hath he contributed to the Woe of others, as well as to his own Damnation. He will be signally marked in another World, for the harm he did in this; receiving his Torments with remarkable notice, when they do groan to themselves, who sinned only against themselves. Will the Powers or Riches he had on Earth guard him against the sorest Vengeance for the hurt he did? No, no: Of this abhorred sort are the Wasters of Countries, Tirannical Princes, Propagaters of Heresies, Perverters of Justice, great Oppressors of the Poor, Wasters of God's Vineyards, Betrayers of their Countries, Silencers of useful Preachers, Enemies to the Ministry, and Calumniators of Ministers, and the like. Happy Multitudes, if such had never been; and next, happy that they soon are taken away; see *Jer. 22. 17, 18.* Such will wish they had been Idiots and Beggars, or any thing else; which could have
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more incapacitated them from doing Mischief.

2 *Inf.* This may convince us of the mischief of a narrow Sectarian Spirit, and consonant Principles, wherever they prevail.

By such a narrow Spirit, I mean a Spirit that confineth Charity to a Sect distinguished from other Christians, by Customs or Opinions that are not Essential to true Godliness, and is embittered and enraged against all who differ from such Usages and Opinions. This is the Spirit of Popery; (which is a Sect, tho' a great one) yea, it is the worst of Popery; and wherever it Rules, the most Diabolical part of Anti christianism is undestroy'd. All the Persecutions and Impositions of that Beast proceed from this very Spirit, and from Principles both Ministring to it, and formed by it (for their influence is mutual.) There's scarce any thing more opposite to Publick Usefulness, or less consistent with the Precepts, Design, and true Spirit of Christianity; the former is that which my Subject so calls me to demonstrate, and testify against, that without doing so I cannot faithfully handle this Doctrine. But who can doubt the Destructiveness of this Spirit, to Publick Benefit and Service,
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if you observe the way and behaviour of all sorts of Persons who are acted by it? For under its impulse it is, that

1. Men confine their Usefulness to their own Faction, as if they were indebted to seek the good of none beyond it; nay, as if Conscience obliged them against all Attempts for Benefits more common and extensive. They judge all Men, out of their Herd, unworthy of their love, concern, or labour; what's the Publick to them, further than as things affect their own? Let the Ship sink, so their Cabbin can be saved; they'll obstruct all Settlement in Church or State, if it be any other than a Provision for their Sect, or managed by any besides themselves, yea, scruple not to advance their Party upon the Ruins of the Publick, as Men see from Age to Age.

2. What is it to such Bigots, if true Christianity prevail with Men, or Converts be multiplied, unless they become their Profelites? Alas! they judge no Man Religious, or Good, out of their own Garb; they surmize him Carnal, who cannot pronounce their *Shibboleth*, and do as good as say, they are all in a Damnable State who at all oppose them. Hence such people are far more industrious to bring Men to a compliance with their fond Peculiarities, than to a subjection to the

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great and most undoubted Precepts of the Gospel, *Mat.* 23. 15. which is a publick Mischief, as in other respects, so also in this : Men hereby waste that Time, Strength and Labour, upon an unprofitable, (if not hurtful) Trifle, which, by a publick Spirit, would be employed in Subserviency to what is really advantageous, *viz.* To make Men Holier and Safer for Eternity. Yet,

3. As if this Effect of such a Spirit were not harmful enough to the Publick, it further prompts Men to malign the most Useful, to obstruct the most prosperous Successes of the Gospel, to blast the most profitable Ministers, and overturn flourishing Churches, by dividing and defaming Methods, with Lies, Violence, and basest Artifice, as if they thought Justice, Kindness and Truth, were due only to Men of their own Opinion, and Cruelty, Trick-ing, and Falshood, were warranted, if not required, towards all who differ, *Gal.* 5. 10. & 6. 10, 12, 15, 16. Yea, it stops not here ; what Poverty, Silencings, Imprisonments, Tortures, and Bloodshed, both by Persecution and Wars, do Men, so spirited, greedily inflict, and bring upon Mankind ? Neighbour Nations, yea, our own proclaim. Such Actings indicate this narrow spirit to prevail ; such a spirit prevailing ; will produce all those Fruits if there

there be but power. It may obtain under very different forms, but is not the more innocent for any of them, tho' it reigns in some of most. The best Cause will not hallow such a frame; the worst Cause generally hath most of it, and very oft it is a sign thereof. But where-ever it is Christ will not own it, his Interest, in a common Good, is sure to lose by it; it springs from carnal selfishness, it's acted and excited by the Devil, whatever is pretended for its Justification, and it tends to publick hurt of the highest kind. Surely it's no part of, nor joined with that *Wisdom which is from above, which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easie to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without injuring, and without hypocrisie*, Jam. 3. 15, 17. no, it's from what is *Earthy, Sensual and Devilish*.

Let us all watch then against the Infection of such a temper, for it's too natural to our unrenewed part to allow Secularity, yea, tho' our Opinions be most Orthodox: Satan will delude you to it under the Name of Zeal, for he knows that Zeal must degenerate into Hellish Fire when it blazeth, in the former instances; yea, when it moves thereto. The quenching of such a Spirit, in others, is our Duty, or, at least, resisting it, that it prevail not to a publick Mischief; nor is he worthy of the Name of a Man, publicly Useful, that

dare not venture all to oppose it ; and the rather, because it's as much worse than Brutish, as the Devil is worse than a Brute, and in many respects gives that wound to Religion, and a publick Good, which open Prophaness is not capable of giving. Nothing but a true publick Christian Spirit can expel it, and without that there will be no aptness to contribute to that progress of the Gospel in the World, which we daily pray for ; nor a possibility to maintain, or improve such a Mercy, by walking in Unity, Love and Peace, to common Edification. To all which, this narrow Spirit of a Party is so irreconcilable and destructive, that giving way thereto, will no more allay it than pouring Oil into a Fire. Happy Times, when Divine Light and Love will so abound, that Self-seekers can serve no turn by such a spirit, and the Honest-minded shall neither be endangered, nor infected by it ; then, and not till then, will a Publick Good be generally pursued.

3 *Inf.* We see one great reason why Self-denial is so proposed by Christ to all his Disciples.

This is the first Article to which all his Followers are to submit, *Mat. 16. 24. If any Man will be my Disciple, let him deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow me.* The two last are impossible to such, as agree not
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not to the first. But besides the necessity thereof to these, Self denial is absolutely requisite to those Services, which Christ designeth by his Disciples, to each other, and to the World; as *Salt* they are to season a corrupt World, as *Lights* to enlighten a blind World, *Mat.* 5. 13, 14. Wisdom is to be justified by them, *Luk.* 7. v. 35. *The virtues of God to be published,* 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. They are to propagate the Interests of our blessed Redeemer, &c. But which of these can we subserve, if Self be not denied? All impediments to attempt such a Work, and most of our unfitness to accomplish it, do arise from carnal Selfishness; where this is subdued, Men are ready and prepared to be common Blessings, as opportunity is afforded. Then Sloth will not delay, Fear shall not discourage, Ambitious or Covetous aims must not divert from any Labours that others may be benefited by; whereas carnal Self must have our Ease indulged, our Humour gratified, and Safety, Credit, and Worldly Advantages, provided for, whatever becomes of Christ's Interests, or a Publick Weal. He that denieth himself most, will be most beneficial; he that cannot do this at all, will rarely attempt, infallibly spoil, and easily quit any publick Service. A *Self seeking* Man will not propose, or prosecute a common Good, farther than his

own present Interests do invite. A *Self-indulging* Man will manage his Endeavours so, as that the Obstacles to his success, by his own Behaviour, will exceed the utmost he contributes to it. A *Self-confident* Man will over-look the good he might do, attempt what he is unfit for, and, as a just rebuke from God, discover his own weakness, instead of being prospered in what he doth foolishly Enterprize in his own Strength.

Did you strictly examine your Hearts and Ways, it would appear most Men's unusefulness proceeds from their selfishness; this locks your Coffers that you cannot give, this benums your Powers that you will not act; this spieth the Lion in the way that you dare not go, this feels the Burden, counts the Charge, and represents the Inconveniencies of Service, as too great to be endured for it; whereas, in all eminent Usefulness, we do neglect the Counsel, Counter-act the Projects, and offer violence to the Inclinations of Self, *Gal. 1. 16.* and therein we must act not only as such who are not their own, but as them who have no Will of their own to Obey, no selfish turn to Serve, nor humour to Gratifie. When therefore selfishness is so certain an obstructor of the Uses Christ designed his Members to, how fit was it to make our denial of it a prime

prime part of true Christianity, and try his genuine Followers by their consent thereto, especially when all publick Mischiefs do as truly spring from Self indulg'd, as publick Benefits do from this denied? Miserable Man, since his Lusts are become himself, and rational Self-love become a stranger. Happy Christian, who best consults his own true Interests, by trampling on his Lusts, restraining his irregular Desires, and rejecting an undue concern for Body, and Earthly Affairs, that he may live to Christ, and a common Good: This Man knows he shall find his truest self most gratified, secured, and provided for, in renouncing and opposing this his greatest Enemy, tho' called *Self*.

I shall, in the next place, Exhort you and my self, according to the nature of this Truth which I have explained.

1. Let us be ashamed, and duly humbled, for our unusefulness in our Generation

Who of us falls not under the charge of this fault? And surely, blushings and grief, are very proper where the charge is true; but knowing how loth we are to acknowledge our fault, and as backward to be affected with the sense of it, when it's too plain to be denied. I shall endeavour,

1. To convince you of your unusefulness in your Generation, that so we may not plead we are ignorant, if we are guilty.

2. To excite you to shame and sorrow for your Unusefulness when under conviction of the Guilt.

1. For conviction of the Guilty. To this end review your Talents, and the improvements of them, for publick Good ; admit, yea, excite your Consciences, to compare your Distributions with your Stock, your Labour with your Strength, and your publick Services with your Time, Gifts, and Opportunities ; deal herein as in the sight of Christ, whose Eyes are as a flame of Fire, *Rev. 1. 14* and be not unconcerned whether you find out your sin or not, for your Ignorance prevents not your Guilt, if the Charge be true, tho' it will hinder your Repentance, whereby your punishment becomes unavoidable. O then, let each of us ask our selves such Questions as these : Have I ever proposed to live to God's Honour, in the good of others, as the great end of Life ? Or have not I utterly disregarded it ? Have I done good to as many persons as I had a Call to, and opportunity for ? Or have not I wilfully exempted very many, to whom I stood obliged ? Hath the good that I have done in the World, been in proportion to my utmost Ability ? Or hath it been very little, and inconsiderable, compared with what I could have done ? Did I begin to be Useful as soon as I was capable, and do

do I continue so to this time, or was I not far in years before I began? Or have I not deserted it, after I made some hopeful beginnings? Am I seriously concerned to see so many Sinners posting to Hell? Doth my Heart bleed at the miserable condition of the poor and distressed? Am I very solicitous for the Churches wellfare and the Nations happiness, so as to set my self to redress Evil and help the Good of each in my place? And this to the extent of my Power? Or, am not I one that slight the wickedness the World lies in, want Bowels to the distressed? If I abound, seldom think or care what becomes of the Church or Nation, so that I and my Friends be but safe and thrive; and accordingly I employ and spare my Estate, Labour, Gifts, and Power.

What Answer doth an awakened Conscience give to these Questions? Doth it not accuse you? Must it not present to you a sad account of great Omissions and many Neglects? Have you no such secret misgivings as these? I fear I have been a dry Tree, and barren Soil; few have cause to bless God for my Life. Oh, the little Good I have ever as yet attempted to do to others! What Fruit I have born hath been to my self, with unfruitful *Ephraim*, *Hos. 10. 1.* If any have been benefited by any thing I have given or done,

done, it hath been by God's over-ruling it, and seldom with any design or good will of mine ; or, at best, I have less intended the Good of others thereby than my own private Advantage ; for my Heart tells me, I coldly attempted the most promising Enterprize from which I expected not Applause or Profit. And soon gave it over when I had a prospect of reproach, or loss thereby. Oh that you would be faithful to your own Souls, and acknowledge your Guilt ; especially, if it be notorious ! great Instances cannot be overlooked, unless you wilfully shut your Eyes. What Trade you have driven in the World must be known to you, tho' some Diversions may be forgotten. Hath publick Service for God been your business in any measure ? Or, have you made the very Worship of God and your most seeming Obedience to subserve Carnal Ends ? Have you spent your Estate on your Lusts, or on the Publick Interests, and poor Members of Christ, next to the supply of your own and Families true Necessities ? What Projects have had the chief Room in your Heads ? What Matters have sat closest to your Hearts ? Were they serving your Generation, and saving your own Soul ? Or, were they the perishing Affairs of Life ? Rest not till you make a true Answer ; nor till that, as past
all

a Publick Spirit. 75

all doubt, be assented to; that so if un-
usefulness is imputed to you by the All-
seeing God, you may cry, I am guilty; *be-
ing convinced of all, and judged of all*, 1 Cor.
14. 24.

2. If you are guilty, be ashamed and
grieved.

His Heart is Obdurate, if not Atheisti-
cal, that owneth his unprofitableness with-
out *shame*, seeing it's a thing so *indecent* and
unbecoming; or without afflicting Sor-
row, it being a thing so sinful in its self,
so unjust towards God, so injurious to
others, and hurtful to your own Souls:
Give way to some thoughts that ought to
strike your secure unconcerned Minds.

1. God keeps a Register of his Gifts
committed to you, and of your Neglects
and Abuses in the employing of them:
He knows what thou hast done, and what
thou mightest have done; what you have
laid out by his Rules, and what under the
Conduct of your own Lusts; nothing of
either did escape his view, or slip his me-
mory; the Account of both are as full and
exact as if Entred in *a Book*, Rev. 20 12.
and shortly the whole will be read by thy
self, in a light which cannot be refused,
yea, transcribed on thy very Conscience,
so as not to be blotted out. Anticipate
th

this by serious reflexions, and sure it must fill you with shame and sorrow, to see so much received, and so little restored, by applying it to the appointed Uses, yea, so much employed to very contrary purposes; so great an Estate, with little or nothing to promote the Gospel, or relieve the Poor, but a very great Sum wasted on thy Lusts, or hoarded to look upon. Will it not affect to find your Names among Magistrates or Ministers, capable for, and called to the respective Duties of such Offices, for a common Good? And over-against your Names thus written, This Magistrate was no terror to Evil doers, no praise to such as did well? Nay, instead of reforming others, he corrupted them by his countenance and example; instead of relieving the injured, he oppressed the Poor, perverted Justice, and persecuted my Servants.

This Minister did not reprove Sin impartially and boldly, especially if the offenders were such as he expected benefit by; he declared not my whole Counsel, but minced and chose what was safest to himself, and most pleasing to others; he accommodated not his labours to the real benefit of all, but to the humours of some; disdaining plain Speech, affecting levity, frothy or amusing discourses: He was more solicitous to know how he was praised, than how others did profit. He let Truth
sink,

sink, and Errours gain ground, when he found his Name or Incomes should suffer by opposing the last, or abetting the first; such a time he dealt treacherously with such & such Souls, he obstructed a publick good, for his private advantage; he excused himself from preaching, pleading, or speaking, tho' he saw my Interest and the real benefit of others required it. How formal and cold in his performances, prayerless and slothful in his preparations! Partial and careless in Discipline, and unexemplary in walking. Notions he took up for Truths, without search or other enquiry, then, is this the Opinion of a Man eminent with the Party I hope to live by? and will it suit with the Fancies of these Men? I might proceed herein, and annex the particular Cases of others. But this may suffice to mind you what a blush should it raise, what an anguish should it cause to see your Names thus underwritten in the Records of Heaven; and know, the Devil keeps also an account, as full as he can, that he may become your Accuser.

2. You can make no Apology for your unusefulness, but what's fit to aggravate your shame and sorrow. A vain Mind, and a seared Conscience, will suggest Excuses, and take up with them; however false and frivolous they be: But Enquiries there

there will be, which will pierce into the Nature and Truth of things, and minister such an awakening Light, as shall render the most careless and confident person *speechless*, *Matth. 22. 12.* It were our mercy that we allowed nothing as a sufficient Plea now, but what will be approved of at the Judgment Bar. Examine therefore the true Reasons why you have not served your Generation as well as others.

Obj. You'll pretend your utter incapacity for service.

Ans. 1. That is a good Apology if true, for God expects not *to reap where he hath not sown*, he is *no such hard Master*, *Matth. 25. 26.* None shall have ground to affix that Character to him. But is this Excuse true? can your Consciences, as drowsie as they are, offer this Plea, and abide by it? *viz.* The only Reason why we were not Publick Blessings, was, because we had no gift, no opportunity, estate or power to be so. If Conscience upon a serious pause dare not stick to this Excuse, but condemns thee, how much *more will God condemn thee, who is greater, and knoweth all things?* *2 John 3. 30.* But if still you verily believe that the Objection states your Case;

Ans. 2. Let me ask you, Have you really

ally pitied the Distressed whom you could not relieve? Have you avoided being hurtful to others, tho' you could not profit them? Have you earnestly prayed for the Church of God, and the good of the Miserable World, bewailing the sorrows of the first, and the misery of the last? Do you rejoyce in, and bless God for those who are useful, without envying the most eminent? When you desire an Estate or Gift, and bewail the want of them, is the later mostly because you cannot be useful, and the former that you may be so? Do you take all due pains, and use all good thrift that you may have somewhat to enable you to be profitable? And if you are poor, and have the help of others, do you make conscience not to ask it till you need; nor ask or take more than you need, that the Relief of the more necessitous may not be hindered? If your hearts cannot honestly say, these things answer my case, it's thus with me; then you have not a temper of mind to be useful if you had Abilities; and it's most probable you are more able to do good, than you have been faithful to do it.

But if indeed your Consciences do justly witness, that you can so answer to the above Questions, as that incapacity is the very Reason your Generation is not more served by you than by your prayers and good

good example ; then you are not the persons to whom my Reproof is directed, so that you do that little you can.

Ans. 3. But such of you as are able to serve their Generation, and neglect it, should be more ashamed and grieved when you consider the true Causes of your unprofitableness.

Your Hinderances to service are from your selves ; your Lusts have the great hand in assigning the governing Reason : Look at the baulks you have made, and the opportunities you have past unusefully over ; and ask thy Conscience, whence was it that I neglected this ? can you be unaffected when you receive this Answer ? my Covetousness, my Pride, my Sloth, my Fear, my Unbelief, or my Unconcernedness for God's Honour, and the Publick Good did hinder me, these made me unwilling and averse, these diverted my Abilities to another Chanel, and would not suffer me to be useful and faithful in my Trust ; were not you governed by one or other of these, whenever you shut your Ears to the Cry of an afflicted Church, of starved Ministers, of a sinking Nation, of diseased Souls, and the distressed Poor.

If it be so, as indeed it will be found, you have cause to be ashamed and mourn. Doth it become Men to beunder the Conduct of such base Guides ? In this respect
God

God hath called you to shew your selves Men, *Isa.* 46. 8. But much more unbecoming is this, to you that wear the Name of Christians; you are called and Redeemed to be zealous of good works, *Titus* 2. 14. Is this to be so? Is this to imitate or obey Christ whom you own for your Lord, and whose Livery you have put on? Follow the Chancel to the Fountain head; be led by your actings to the posture and frame of your hearts; and judge what vile spirits act you, what a dominion have these Lusts in your Soul, that thus command your Talents, and determine the scope of your Lives in opposition to the loudest Calls. Oh blush and weep, that with all thy Light and Helps, under all thy Christian Profession and Hopes, thy heart is so earthly and carnal, so sensual and devilish; so full of hatred to God and Man, as the Authority of these Lusts import; and thy unusefulness doth testifie in the clearest Light, the Holy Spirit hath made no saving change if you are altogether useless; the change at most is very imperfect, whiles your usefulness is so much hindered by these unsubdued Lusts: The very unprofitable must be made other Men, *Matt.* 12. 33. and the less profitable are not very good Men. You have those dry leaves and those dead branches which may well put you to the blush,

blush, and fill you with fear, *John 15. 2.* the unfruitful branch will be cast out.

3. Your unusefulness expresseth that treachery, ingratitude and injustice towards God, which must cause shame and sorrow in every thinking person.

The least acquaintance with the Infinite God, as our Owner, Ruler and Benefactor, would strike an amazement and terror in our minds, that this sort of demeanour towards him, should be justly ascribed to any of us; yet as far as publick unusefulness is our Crime, all this base Treatment of God is chargeable upon us.

1. It's Treachery towards God, as it's contrary to our Profession, a breach of our Vows, and betraying our Trust. Let's consider this in three parts.

1. When you profess your selves the Servants of God, the followers of Christ, inspired by his Spirit, satisfied with his Covenant Blessings as your Portion, Expectants of his heavenly Rewards, and acknowledgers of him as your Ultimate End. Do not you hereby profess that you are employed about his work, and serving his purposes in the World, that this is your Trade, and the business of your Life. You who profess your selves Christians, profess

no

no less than what I have above described ; but pray see how empty a profession it is ; how far otherwise you do than you pretend, and what other sort of People you are than you would seem to be ; when all this while you neglect God's work, and follow your own ; you overlook his designs, and serve your own turn : May not God say, *They profess to serve me, but in works they deny me, Titus 1. 16. With their mouth they shew much kindness, but their heart goeth after their Covetousness, Ezek. 33. 31.* and after their Pride, and after their selfish Designs.

Do you think God will be mocked, or that you can impose on him ? it cannot be ; blush then at your own falshood ; whiles your heads are so seldom projecting how shall we best honour our God, and form his Interests, if you are satisfied with an empty noise, or theatrical shew ; fear lest Christ apply himself to you as to *Judas, Betrayest thou me with a kiss ? Luke 23. 48.* Do you profess all this, that you may be exempted from promoting my concerns in the World ; yea, that you may dis-serve me the more in betraying my Cause by your connivance and neglects ? Oh let us mourn that our very profession testifies against us !

2. Unusefulness is a breach of your Vows, made to the Living God.

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Your Baptismal Vow includes a solemn dedication of your selves and all you have to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with an engagement of living to God, and not to his Rivals, be they the World, Flesh or Devil. Consider your unusefulness, and see, is that a performance of this Engagement, or consistent with it? Sure by your behaviour you think *it was an error* that you made this Vow, *Eccles. 5. 6.* but know, they are no Christians who consent not to it; and having engaged, you cannot think that meer making this Vow was principally designed in Christ's Institution; no, it was ordained to be made, that you might be more sensibly obliged to execute it, especially in so principal a part of it. However light you make of your great and wilful unserviceableness in your day, you are therein no less than perfidious and perjured in breaking your Oaths, and those oft renewed before the Lord at his Table, oft it may be in Sicknes; besides the Oaths you have taken as Magistrates or Ministers.

To your Perfidiousness you have added Sacrilege against your Self-dedication, of which hereafter. Ought not our Souls bleed to think, I gave up my self and my all to God, to serve and honour him, to plead Christ's Cause, and advance his Interests, to live for him, and not for my self; Yea, I have signed his Covenant to
do

do this, and vowed it upon the Memorials of his Death, and in several Extremities when Conscience represented my dangerous neglects; and yet notwithstanding all, I employ my Estate, my Time, my Gifts, my Power, as if at full liberty to use them as I please; as if Christ had no Interest to be served by me, or I were under no obligation to spend or adventure any thing for his service.

3. You have betrayed that Trust which God committed to you.

Whoever is a Minister of Christ, is a *Steward* to whom the Truths and Institutions of Christ are entrusted, to maintain, dispense and defend, 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2. He is a *Pastor*, to whose care the Flock of Christ is committed, 1 Pet. 5. 2. In becoming Ministers, we undertake this Trust. The *Life of Souls* is very much committed to us as *Watch-men*, Ezek. 33. 8. It cannot be denied then that a careless selfish unfaithful Minister betrays his Trust; he dischargeth not what he hath undertaken, but deals falsely and treacherously with our faithful Lord.

Magistrates are entrusted with God's Sword, and Subjects committed to their care to the degree of power which they have over them; doth not that Magistrate then deal treacherously with God in be-

traying this Trust, when he preserveth not the Innocent, but defends the Guilty, &c. Yea, all the Talents any Man hath, is put into his hands to lay out as God directs for a common Good; and every one whom we ought to benefit by that Talent, is committed to our Trust as far as his Welfare depends upon that supply.

Yea, Christ hath intrusted every Christian with his Honour, with his Interests, and with the advancement of his Kindom in this World. We are intrusted as his Witnesses, his Soldiers, &c. But, let us blush and mourn, that as far as we neglected to serve our Generation, we have betrayed all his publick Concerns in this World; all that he hath put into our hands. Ah! had none been more faithful than we, his Gospel, his Ministry, his Members had been in a condition more deplorable than they be. O that my Eyes were Waters! Treachery is a vile blot; Treachery towards God is the worst sort: And yet this have you been guilty of; yea, in saddest Instances, viz. belying your Profession, breaking your Vows, and betraying your Trust. May it not well fill you with confusion?

2. By your Unusefulness you have dealt ungratefully with God.

Ingratitude

Ingratitude is a monstrous Crime, and becomes more so, as he deserveth well at our hands against whom we are ungrateful. Where there is any Ingenuity there will be relents, to think how God hath deserved our utmost Service, and what a base requital we have made by our great neglects. He *hath not spared his own Son*, but gave him to be a Sacrifice for us when Enemies ; and we have grudged a few pounds, murmured at a little labour, or hazard, in serving him, who is our best Friend, and daily Benefactor. *It is more blessed to give than to receive*, Act. 20. 35. God hath made us able to give, and others in need to receive, when he might have put them in our case and us in theirs ; yet we basely refuse to obey him, in giving out of our abundance to such as want it. How unthankful are we to the giver of all our Gifts ? That we refuse to Honour him, by instructing the Ignorant, and reclaiming Transgressors, when he could as easily have qualified them to Instruct us, and left us in a greater need of their assistance than they are of ours. Whatever we are, have, or hope for, are the Fruits of his meer Bounty, and distinguishing Favour to us ; that we are capable to do him any service, or others any good, are Endowments he dispensed to us by Name, and that these shall not be used at all for him, is high Ingratitude.

tude. In Mercy he hath long tried us, he hath spared us again and again, after that our Barrenness hath provoked him to cut us off, as well as others whom he hath cast out, *Luk. 13. 8.* and still we abuse his patience, and persist to cumber the ground, and be little profitable to any. By great Rewards he invites us, by great Assistances he encourageth us to that which he might bind us to, at our peril, by his meer Command, yet, as base Wretches, we loyter, yea, refuse his Work; we wave what's hard, and think too much of what is easiest; we cast off all that we can tolerably rid our selves of.

Ought not it to be for a Lamentation, and the more so, if you can but discern the malignity and contempt you have expressed towards God in your unthankful returns? What's the Language of your refusing to serve your Generation hitherto? No kinder, no more expressive of Gratitude, for all his favours, than this; God deserves not my Pains, my Estate would be foolishly laid out for him; what is he to me, that I should disturb my Ease, hazard my Name, displease my Friends, or suffer any thing for a common Good? For my part, so that all will be of my Mind, let Christ the Redeemer have none to Honour him, let Satan carry away the whole Spoil, let the Gospel of Christ have no place,

place, let his Ministers and Members perish as well as need, let Heaven have no Tribute from this World but Blasphemies, let God be reproached, by entrusting such a one as I am, with what might benefit the Community, let this Earth of the Lords be a Hell for Misery and Sin; so let all be, rather than I'll run any danger, sustain any labour, or be at any expence or trouble. Yet this hath been the Language of your unprofitable Behaviour, as far as you have allowed it, and God doth so interpret it, however partial you are towards your selves.

Is not this horrid Ingratitude to our Blessed Lord? And do dry Eyes, or a Face lifted up, agree hereto? We may deservedly take up those words, we are ashamed and confounded, because we bear the reproach of our past times, *Jer. 31. 19.* it's time to blush, when all his special favours do thus reproach us, and our returns have breathed such gross Ingratitude.

3. Your Unusefulness hath been the highest Injustice against God.

Whiles you have refused to be profitable according to your Ability, you have denied to render to God that which is his own; you have defrauded, and sacrilegiously with-held and mis-applied that which was his and not yours. Whose are
you

you your selves? Whose are all your Gifts and Estates which you have thus grudged? They are the Lords; of every *Talent* he may justly say, *its my own*, Mat. 25. 27. *The Cattle upon a thousand Hills are mine*, Psal. 50. 1. *The Earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof*, Psal. 24. 1. Hence he fastens injury on Idolatrous Israel, Ezek. 16. 17, 18, 19. *Thou didst take thy Jewels of my Gold and my Silver, and thou hast set my Oil and my Incense before thy Idols, and my Meat, &c.* But especially, bethink your selves how many ways you, even you, un-useful ones, are his. You are the *Work* of his Hands, he gave you a Being, or you had never existed; he gave you to be what you are, even rational Creatures, which he was no more necessitated to make you than crawling Toads, Job 33. 6.

He sustains you in Being and in your Capacity for service: *In him we live, and move, and have our being*, Acts 17. 28. By his Bounty are you provided for; and by his watchful Eye preserved every Moment, Gen. 48. 15, 16.

You were Redeemed by the Blood of Christ, he bought you into a capacity for service, when you were fetter'd in Prison in order to eternal Vengeance, Zech. 9. 11. Luke 1. 74.

You have solemnly owned the claim of God in Christ to you, by offering up your selves,

selves, and all you possess, to this Glorious One; answerably to *Rom. 12. 1.* where-by thou art his also by self-dedication. Seeing then his claims to you are thus various and universal, how much have you wronged him, in denying him the use of his own, and done your utmost to defeat him in the End for which he created and redeemed you? Did not he *create all things for himself?* To bring him Glory, and do him Service, to the degree whereof they were capable, *Prov. 16. 4. Col. 1. 16. Christ died and rose, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living, Rom. 14. 9.* Was not this that he might rule all, dispose of all, and be served by all? How unrighteous then have you been, as far as unusefulness is your Fault, you have carried it as if he could *not do with his own as he pleased.* You his Creatures have refused to go on his Errand; or, *work in his Vineyard,* *Matth. 21. 29, 30.* You his purchased Ones have not agreed to *serve him with your Bodies and Spirits, which are his,* *1 Cor. 6. 20.* His Money you have refused to give as he directs. His Office, & Power you have neglected to apply to the Ends and by the Rules which he prescribes. His Gifts have been sacrilegiously taken away from the service to which he allotted them.

Have not your Ways been in all this unequal? And can you own it without
Blash-

Blushings, and renting your very Hearts? Our unusefulness ought not to be lightly esteemed by us, when it's so full of Treachery, Ingratitude, and Injustice, towards the Lord our God. *Paul* knew Service went with God's Title, That *God whose I am, and whom I serve*, Act. 27. 23.

4. You should be ashamed and grieved for your Unusefulness, because it hath been very injurious to all Persons whom you have neglected to be profitable to.

They have a joint charge of Wrong against you, in that you have defrauded them of what was theirs in Right, tho' you detained it. We are *Debtors* to as many as God hath appointed us to be useful, *Rom. I. 14.*

God directed to them, by you, whatever help or benefit he requires you to confer on them, and therefore you have acted the part of a fraudulent Messenger in disowning their claim, and withholding what's their due.

The *Church* of God may complain, This was he who owed me great Service, but he never rendred it to me in my Ministers, or my Members; he did nothing for my Defence, Enlargement, or Improvement.

Your *Country* may exclaim, This Man enjoy'd my Defence, Plenty, and Conveniencies,

niciencies, and was capable, by his Prayers, Votes, Purse and Gifts, to have contributed to my Welfare, but he hath wickedly sought himself, and served himself of me, but I am no way benefited by him in my Reformation, Safety, or Liberty, &c.

Your *Families* have a Right to Godly Education, as well as other Benefits; but they do testifie against you as injurious, in not instructing, perswading, and striving with them, to rescue them from the power of the Devil, and to become devoted to the Lord.

The *Poors* cries go up to Heaven against you, for keeping back their Portion of your Substance, and denying that Advice and Help whereby you might have made them useful and comfortable.

Such just Complaints may well touch their Hearts against whom they are directed; perhaps you would hate to defraud any Man in what the Laws of the Land declare unjust, but is not the Law of Nature, and the positive Laws of God, as sufficient to determine what's Just or Unjust, as Humane Laws can be? And these do accuse you to be injurious to Men in your wilful unprofitableness.

But besides all this, it may be many are exclaiming against you among the Damned already, as necessary to their Miseries, by
your

your neglects as well as otherwise. They are dead in their sin for want of thy reproof, and thy slackness in pulling them out as Brands out of the burnings. If our Hearts have any tenderness under a sence of so many and manifest injuries, we must feel this Wickedness much embittered to us.

5. You should blush at, and bewail your Unusefulness as it is a great hurt to your selves.

Unprofitable persons govern themselves by a great mistake, in that they fall into mischief the way they think to escape it ; to avoid Self-hurt, they refrain being useful to others, but you'll find that thereby you incur a far greater damage. For fear of loss, you kept from others what you ought to have laid out for their Relief, and you think it's so much saved for your own benefit, but God will so order matters, that all *such riches were kept to your own hurt*, Eccl. 5. 13. Whenever power is mis-applied, or not exerted for common Benefit, that's *the time wherein a Man ruleth over another to his own hurt*, Eccl. 8. 9.

Folly, when detected, is cause of shame : Mischiefe, when perceived, forceth sorrow in him on whom it falleth ; it's your Blindness and Infidelity, that you now find not, in your great Unusefulness, the plainest evidence

evidence of both, but what Unbelief will not now discern, Experience shortly will force the securest of you to acknowledge, and that to the filling of you with shame and grief. Oh that you *would consider your latter end*, Deut. 32. 29. *i. e.* that you would consider what this (selfish barren) course will come to, what it will end in. I can by good warrant assure you, it will not be either so comfortable, nor gainful, as to justify your Neglects. You, perhaps, will say, With what I save by not relieving the Poor, or promoting any good Design, I shall *get an Inheritance the more hastily* by so much. Is it so? Take God's Word for an Answer, *But the end thereof shall not be Blessed*, Prov. 20. 21. Write that as a Prophecy upon whatever of your Estates God hath forbidden you to lay up, by his Call to lay it out. The same is applicable to all that Strength, Safety, Credit, or Interest, you think you secure, by neglecting to serve your Generation; *the end thereof shall not be blessed*.

To Evidence this, and thereby further Convince you that Unusefulness yields reason of shame and sorrow; of shame, by your folly in it, of sorrow by the mischief of it. Consider,

1. You can keep nothing with a Blessing which you have gotten or saved by Unusefulness;

usefulness; very oft God even disappoints Men of getting what they propose to get, by their unfaithfulness to him, and unusefulness to others; with *Balaam* they miss of what they so greedily desire, and some way or other God signally defeats them in the danger they thought to prevent, and the benefit they expected; so that they are forced to say, even at present, I have neither saved, nor gotten any thing, by refusing to serve my Generation; I am as poor as if I had laid out for God what I covetously withheld, *Prov. 11. 24.* I am as much reproached, and as little esteemed, by these Men, for fear of whose Tongues, or Dislike, I betrayed the Truth, as if I had faithfully adher'd to it.

But upon supposition you have made some present Advantage, yet you may not long keep it, God may soon blast it to the terror of others. *Judas* soon parted with the Silver he got by betraying Christ, *Matth. 27. 34.* some have been burnt in their House, by God's Hand, who refused to burn for the Truths sake.

Ananias soon lost the use of what he reserved from publick Service, and his Life to the Bargain, *Act. 5. cap.* Oh! how many remarkable Instances are upon Record, of the ruined Families of such as acquir'd Estates by unfaithfulness to God, and uncharitableness to Men? Their Children

dren could not keep what their Parents perfidiously heaped. Nay, Examples are very many, that did not keep, for their own time, the Wealth or Reputation which they secured at the price of a common Harm, but became Beggary and Infamous.

God hath made many Men's Parts to wither, and their Health to decay, whose Sloth made their Gifts and Strength unuseful to the Publick ; such a Method God took with *Israel*, when they disregarded God's House, and over-regarded their own, *Hag. I. 4, 9, 11. Ye looked for much, and it came to little ; and when ye brought it home I did blow upon it. Why, saith the Lord of Hostes ; Because of mine House that lies waste, and ye run every Man into his own House.* What advantage they got was small, and that soon turned to no Account, because of God's Blast ; it was presently reduced to nothing.

But supposing God, for wise Ends, suffer you to keep what you have gotten or saved, yet I am sure you cannot keep it *with a Blessing*. If you are Ungodly it's your *Snare*, which is the work of Curses ; If you have serious Spirits, you must uneasily enjoy it, and use it with bitter reflections, as what you hold not with God's Good-will ; a defecrated accursed thing, that hazardeth and curseth the rest, which,

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without

without this, might have been possess'd comfortably and safely; yea, and have been employed to blessed Uses, whereas now God disdains to accept, or succeed the residue to his Service, but he embittereth it to your disquiet, as well as emptieth it to your dissatisfaction.

2. You shall be great losers by your un-
usefulness, notwithstanding all you can get
or save thereby.

No profit, by deceitfulness towards God,
will countervail the loss you will sustain:
Bethink you whether you *have not lost al-*
ready more than that amounts to: Do you
enjoy that peace you once had? Have you
that free access into his presence as some-
times you found? Doth he afford you that
communion with himself, and tokens of
his favour, in which you were accustomed
to relish the highest delight? Have you not
less composure, and fixedness of Heart,
when dangers threaten you? Do you ex-
pect the same returns of Prayer, or use
you to meet with them as formerly? Are
not you more left to your selves in Duties
and Temptations too? Have you not less
Supports when Afflictions befall you? Have
not your Graces abated in their Strength
and Exercise? Have not you less of God
in every Ordinance, and less success in
your Performances? In such things thou
dost

dost more than vomit up the Morſel thou haſt eaten, and loſe thy ſweet words, as Prov. 23. v. 8.

But if thy groſs Neglects be impenitently perſiſted in, thy Loſſes will be far greater, not only in further degrees of what's above-mentioned, but thou ſhalt loſe all *the good* thou haſt ſeemed to do. *John 2. 8. All ſhall be taken from thee* which thou appeareſt to have, yea, or really haſt, *Matth. 25. 28, 29.* Thou ſhalt loſe all thy *Hopes*, however great or confident; thou ſhalt loſe that *Life* which thou didſt ſo over-ſondly love, *John 12. 25.* Thou ſhalt loſe thy *own Soul*, which the gain of the whole World cannot not recompence, *Luke 9. 24.* You ſhall not find the Good promiſed to the Merciful and Righteous, which is no leſs than *Life, Righteouſneſs, and Honour*, Prov. 21. 21. You ſhall forfeit all the *higher Degrees* of Glory promiſed to the eminently Uſeful; yea, and the leſſer Degrees promiſed to the faithfully Uſeful, tho' not ſo Eminent. You ſhall neither be Ruler of *ten Cities* nor of *five*; no *entrance into the Joy of your Lord* ſhall be admitted you, *Luke 19. Matth. 25. 21.* The Rivers of God's Pleaſure you ſhall never taſte; that beatifick Viſion you ſhall never experience; the Crown of Glory you ſhall not wear; for theſe God hath conſigned to the faithful Labourer. Can you

that never attempted, or soon fainted in serving God in your Generation, hope to reap as they *who fainted not in well-doing*? Gal. 6. 9. Shall you who *laid up nothing in store, no Treasure in Heaven*, expect to be *Rich* there as they who did? Luke 12. 33. 1 Tim. 6. 19. It's in vain, and forest disappointment will attend it. For the utterly Unfruitful will have no Interest in any of that Glory; the less Useful will miss of the higher Degrees of it. O compute your Gain and Loss! And what Idiot could have made a weaker Choice, or taken a more foolish Course than you have done? Folly will put you to the Blush, to see how vainly you refused to be *rich towards God* by publick Service, that you might get a *Treasure* for your *self* by your *layings up*, in a neglect of common Usefulness, Luke 12. 18, 19, 21. He was branded as a *Fool* in *bestowing all his Goods* in his Barns, and laying out nothing that he might be *rich towards God*. And so will all be mark'd, who imitate him.

3. You shall endure great Punishments for your Unusefulness.

Besides a privation of Good, God will sensibly imbitter this Sin: He oft doth testifie against it in the Posterity of the Unprofitable, who, by being so, *trouble their own House*, Prov. 11. 29. There are many
Curfes

Curſes lying on the Head of ſuch as withhold Relief from the Poor, aſſiſt not in a common Danger, and contribute not to publick Good when capacitated for it, *Prov. 11. 26. Judg. 5. 23.* all which you ſtand expoſed to by your Unuſefulneſs. Have not you already met with ſome remembrances, that God diſlikes your ſelfiſh Ways and narrow Spirits? Hath not he emptied your Mercies, embittered your Comforts, filled your Souls with Terrors, and encountred you with a frowning Countenance? Hath not he let Satan looſe upon you or yours?

But theſe are but the *beginnings of Sorrows*, and preſages of greater Woes, unleſs you repent; he will *cut thee down as a barren Fig-Tree* for thy great Leaves without Fruit, for thy *cumbring the ground* where thou mighteſt be uſeful, *Luk. 13. 5, 6.* how full of terrors will Death preſent it ſelf, when God will force thy Conſcience to reflect on thy many Neglects, with a clear view of the hateful Cauſes of them, and the miſerable Effects thereof? With anguiſh thou wilt then bemoan thy ſelf, and vainly wiſh for the paſt opportunities of Service, and that thou haſt a Heart to have improv'd them better.

Death, thus full of Stings, will lodge thee in the unſeen State; but, alas! how unprovided and ill prepared? The Face of

thy Judge will be terrible, when he shall demand an Account of thy Stewardship, *Luke 16. 2.* and reckon with thee about his Talents, and thy occupation of them, *Mat. 25. 19.* it will be in vain to deny or diminish your Trust, and what Answer can you find that can satisfie him, or please yourselves? If you hope his Merits may be pleadable by you, he'll answer, they are not applied but according to my Promises. You may as well expect they shall be imputed without Faith, as to a dead Faith, a Faith that did not invigorate to holy fruitfulness and fidelity in my Service, was a dead Faith, and so no Faith in Gospel estimate, and therefore cannot save, *Jam. 2. v. 14, 20.*

To plead your Idleness, Fear or Covetousness, will be to proclaim the provoking causes of your approaching Ruine. What a heart-cutting charge will you find drawn against you, with a Sentence pursuant thereto: Thou wert ashamed of me before Men, now I am ashamed of thee before my Father, *Mark 8. 38.* Thou didst deny me in the other World, now I deny thee in this World, *Mat. 10. 33.* When I was an hungry thou didst not feed me, when I was in Prison thou didst not visit me; Depart therefore from me thou cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels, *chap 25. 41.* Thou didst hide my Talent,
(yea

(yea Talents) therefore *cast this unprofitable Servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Mat. 25. 30.* What mind can conceive the misery included in a condition made up of all the Woes these several expressions import? Were they believed throughly, what we may now conceive of them would overwhelm a Man that but seems in danger of enduring this misery; and being that these several places describe the Sentence pronounced against the unprofitable, who have neglected a common good (as well as their own Souls) and betrayed the Publick Interests of Christ in their day, it follows that whatever in each place aggravates their misery, must be put together to give us a just account thereof. Can your heart endure but the supposing your self the person whom Christ singeth out in the View of Angels and Men; and thus speaks to from his Tribunal, Thou selfish, false and useless Wretch, so vile, that without reproach to my Perfections, to my Holy Word and Glory, I can shew no favour to thee (which is Christ's being ashamed of him) I do here reject all thy pretensions to my Image, Merits, Covenant and Service; and do declare thou art no living Member, Follower, Servant or Witness of mine, nor is my Honour, Truth or Fulness concerned at all in thy being happy (which

is Christ's *denying him.*) Thou art now fallen into my hands, and the time of my Vengeance is come, I pronounce thee guilty of perfidiousness to my Name and Interests, and unprofitable to others and thy self, in not rightly employing my Talents for common benefit, as well as thine own; for this I now effectually and irrevocably adjudge thee to the *Loss* of all Felicity, Glory, Grace and Joy, which my presence doth afford, and this without any future *Hopes* from any further strivings with thee, or offers to thee, and be thou now sealed and *separated* to the height of Misery (*that is, Depart from me you cursed*) a Misery in its nature and degree *so great*, as what's fitted to torment those capital Enemies of mine, *the Devil and his Angels*, who shall be thy Companions, because they were thy Rulers; *so painful* to thy Body as the *hottest fire*, and not less to thy Soul, else it were not fitted to torment the *Devils*, who are Spirits; *so full of horror* as Darkness is, yea a Darkness as remote and free from Light as can be, (that is *outer Darkness*) and all *so resented, felt and afflictive*, as to cause the extremest sorrow, anguish and fretting against God, thy Companions, and thy self (*there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*) And as for *Duration*; it's *everlasting fire*, it's for ever that this Sentence shall take hold of, and be executed

executed upon thee ; which is confirmed by another place that declareth the continuance of the Misery of unuseful Men, under the Emblem of *Chaff*, as opposed to useful *Wheat* ; *the Chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire, Luke 3. 17.* which is the same with those words , *their Worm dieth not, and their Fire is not quenched, Mark 9. v. 46.* There's no hopes of an alteration of their Estate, unless words cannot express the Eternity of Hell Torments ; yea, unless Sinners may be reclaimed when expelled from all the gracious Influences of the Divine Presence (implied in depart from me) Yea, unless there be a more *Valuable Sacrifice* for Sinners than the Son of God was ; for this will not relieve them, *Heb. 9. 26.* Yea, if there be not an Administration for reducing Sinners *after, and fitter than the Kingdom of Christ* ; for this will be delivered up upon that time that this Sentence passeth the first time on Sinners found then alive , solemnly upon the departed and living, and executed upon Devils, who till then are *Prisoners*, *1 Cor. 15. 23, 24, 26, 28. 2 Pet. 2. 4.* compared with *Matth. 8. 29.* Ought not you to tremble at this prospect of Eternal Misery ? Yet if you are these unfaithful and unprofitable Sinners during Life, you will be thus found guilty and sentenced when you Die. Consider again and again what thou

thou must hear, feel and endure, for thy unprofitableness; add this to the great things thou lovest by it, and also that what now thou seemest to get or save through unusefulness, cannot at present be kept with a Blessing; when thou hast done thus in a serious manner, I will appeal to thy self, whether thy folly is not gross enough to make thee ashamed, and thy Misery great enough to fill thee with terroure, that unusefulness in thy Age hath been allowed by thee? Yea, I dare give you leave to put all the loss, charge, labour and danger of Publick Service, with all the ease, safety and benefit of unserviceableness; and set them all against the fore-mentioned Mischiefs which attend the unprofitable; and if thou believest the certainty of these, be then affected at thy barrenness, as the cause appears to thy self; nay, were there but a probability, nay, but a possibility that these fruits of unprofitableness were true, it were sufficient to make thee ashamed and grieved for it.

Obj. Tho' I must agree that it's folly to become liable to these Mischiefs, yet are all who are unuseful subject to endure them? for if so, who shall escape? Supposing a capacity to service; I shall briefly answer.

Ans. There is, 1. A degree of unusefulness,

ness, which through weakness and temptation may oft befall a godly Man, which indeed shall not bring Eternal Misery upon him ; tho' God usually testifies his displeasure against it in this Life.

2. There is an unusefulness which will infallibly bring Eternal Misery upon whoever is guilty of it. If it be not so, you must question the plainest discoveries of the Gospel of Truth.

Obj. 2. How shall I know the kind and degree of that unusefulness that will certainly bring Eternal Misery, from that which a godly Man may be guilty of thro' weakness and temptation?

Ans. A full Answer to this and the other Objections may be gathered from what is largely insisted on in the former heads. But because some may not so easily apply that to such particular cases ; I shall therefore give you these short hints.

1. The Unusefulness of any good Man is such as doth consist with an unfeigned dedication and habitual devotedness of himself and all he hath to God in Christ, and this is persevered in.

He is no Believer or good Christian that is not thus devoted to God ; and such unusefulness as is consistent with this, is not a Mark of Hell.

But

But that unusefulness which is not consistent with unfeigned dedication, and habitual devotedness to God in Christ, is an infallible Mark of Eternal Misery if persisted in.

2. He that shall escape Eternal Misery, is not unuseful in the prevailing scope of his life ; but every Son of Perdition is so ; the course of his life is unprofitable, and thence he is denominated unfruitful in his best State ; the stated bent of his Soul is to do more hurt than good.

3. What good he doth who shall escape Hell, he usually doth it in uprightness, from love and obedience to God, with a believing respect to God in Christ ; but the Child of Wrath, in whatever seeming good he doth, hath a greater regard to carnal considerations, and acteth not from Faith, Love, and obediential regard to God.

4. The good Man repents of, and bewails his unusefulness, when convinced of it, and heartily desires to know wherein he is culpably unuseful, that he may reform, as well as by Faith in Christ sue out his Pardon upon repenting of it. But the ungodly is hardened in his unusefulness, unwilling to know it, set against reforming, if not insensible of his need of Pardon,

don, yea oft justifies himself in his selfish unprofitable course.

5. The true Christian is truly glad and thankful when God doth most encline and enlarge his heart to overcome his selfishness, and to act in the most useful serviceable manner, tho' no carnal respects of his own be served thereby; yea, tho' loss, reproach and suffering attend it, so God be but honoured, and a common good subserved. But the carnal Man, if he hath been over-ruled to any thing which proves useful, yet if his own Credit or worldly Benefit be not advantaged, and much more if he comes to suffer by it; he is grieved, and repenteth of what he hath done, whatever honour God receives, or benefit others get thereby. By these things you may know whether you are such useless persons as shall be pardoned and saved, or such useless persons as shall endure Eternal Misery, if you persist in this state.

Obj. 3. But tho' I continue useless in that manner as the Word of God declareth Eternal Misery will follow upon it; yet I shall be safe if I believe in Christ for the pardon of it, and that I'll do, and yet not reform my course.

Ans. Deceive not thy self with vain words, what thou sowest, that thou shalt reap, Mat. 6. v. 19. And be it known to thee, that no
Faith

Faith in Christ will be available to thy pardon, which is not effectual to turn thee from that unusefulness, and which doth not include in it a dedication and prevailing habitual devotedness of thy self to Christ and his service in a common good. *A living Faith worketh by love. Gal. 5.6.* and a dead Faith will never justify; yea, it self is condemned as a false Faith if it want good works, when opportunity for them is afforded. And that Man must impose upon himself, who can imagine that the Faith which is necessary to pardon must work by Love, and yet not work in Love towards our Neighbours at all; but if you grant it must work in Love towards our Neighbour, I ask, must it not work towards all that are designed by the word *Neighbour*, whom we are to love? if so, it includes all Men whatever within the reach of my ability to do good to; and if it be by Love to All them that it will work, it must express it self in those works that instance the sincerity of our Love to them for their benefit; and so true Faith will work towards all as far as Love is due to them, and do all that sincere Love to them will prompt to, which is no less than serving our Generation, or that publick Usefulness which you neglect. Can the Tempter still delude you to think, that you will have a pardon of your Unusefulness

fulness by such a Faith as doth not make you resolve to be Useful? Yea, or doth not effectually produce this Usefulness as you are called thereto? Alas! you contradict, yea, nullifie a Justifying Faith, when you say, I will not reform my useless Life, and yet I will believe in Christ for a pardon of it; the English of which is, I will believe in Christ for Pardon with such a Faith as Christ never promised pardon to, and upon which he will never pardon me. This, instead of mitigating thy Folly in being unuseful, doth greatly augment and proclaim it; it sets thee no safer from endless Misery, but by encouraging thee in the course that certainly leads to it; it makes thy enduring that Misery the surer.

2 *Exh.* Resolve henceforward to be Useful in your Generation; yea, eminently Useful, if capable thereof.

All I have hitherto insisted on tends to this, That you may resolve at last to engage in this Work. For this end I have explained this Dury, and commended the Performance thereof; for this I have said so much, to discover the Neglects of it, and to convince of the Folly and Danger of those Neglects: All which will be lost, if you go hence unresolved to be Publick Blessings in your Day.

What

What avail all Arguments, if they incline not our backward Hearts to Usefulness? They will no more than discover our Obstinateness, and aggravate our Condemnation; but in hope of a better Effect, I shall Address my self to each of you.

The more remiss you have been hitherto, the more incumbent on you it is, now to engage your Souls in this Work; from this time, do what you can to serve the Will of God in your Generation; *devise great and liberal things*, Isa. 32. 8. Let nothing set bounds to your Usefulness, but a Natural or Moral incapacity; *i. e.* somewhat impossible, or something unlawful. What's impossible God requires not; and to do, or *speake wickedly, or deceitfully for God, he will not accept*, Job 13. 7. But what's Lawful, and within your Power, omit not; the greater it is, the more will God be Honoured, others Benefited, and thy own Divine temper expressed.

Be pleased with the largest opportunities of Service, and faithfully answer each; trifle not, but be in earnest; move not slowly, but run *the ways of God's Commandments, as one whose Heart is enlarged by him*, Psal. 119. *Beat not the Air*, as if uncertain of the nature or tendency of thy Work, it's for God, it will end in Glory, 1 Cor. 9. 26. Let us each, in our places, say with Nehemiah, cap. 2. 20. *The Lord*
will

will prosper us, therefore we, his Servants, will arise and build.

That I may more usefully urge this General Exhortation, I shall direct it according to some different circumstances, which you may be in, and answerably direct and plead with you.

I. To such as are still unwilling to serve their Generation.

Either you are convinced that this is your Duty, or you are not; if you are perswaded it's your Duty, what peace or hope can you possess whiles you live in the neglect of it? If you think it is not your Duty, what sence can you put upon so many plain Scriptures that command it? That promise such Rewards to, and Assistances in it? That threaten such sore Miseries to the Neglecters of it? That so approve of, and praise the Practice and Practisers of it, and brand the Name of such as Accursed who refused to do so? If these things suffice not to prove a Duty, nothing can; and I am sure God hath not excepted your Names, from the Obligation to obey it any more than others. But whether convinced that this is your Duty, or unconvinced, pray consider, as you are *Men*, you are not Born for your selves, but for your Country too: Nature dictates this, Heathens assert it, your own Hearts commend it in others, and disapprove the contrary; yea,
I many

many Brutes reproach you, when they'll hazard themselves to defend their Young, and secure each other against a Common Enemy or Mischief.

As you are Men *created by the living God*, you are accountable to him; you ought to answer the ends for which he made you, which were to serve his Purposes, and bring him Glory.

He was too Wise and Holy to make you Lawless as to himself, or to the Community of which you are Members; nor is he so remiss a Governor, as not severely to animadvert Offences so publicly mischievous.

As you are called *Christians*, bethink your selves the Lord Jesus redeemed you, that you might return to a state of Subjection and Service, and under that Law you are to him, *Rom. 14. 9.* It's no small Mercy that he calls you to this, considering you were condemned Rebels, and that he is ready to accept it, and assist you in it. What Ingratitude is it to live to your selves, and not to him who paid so dear for your Ransom? *1-Cor. 6. 20.*

Further, consider the before-described Miseries which you wilfully chuse, and the glorious Blessings you certainly forfeit by your unprofitableness; herein you are cruel to your selves, when you fondly think it's self-indulgence; you destroy your selves,

selves, and yet weakly pretend to self-advantage. Reflections upon your madness herein, will be a great part of your torment.

Perhaps you have not thought what you expect from others, tho' they must be unobliged to you, upon the same Reasons as you can give for your being free from the Duty of Usefulness to them; to say nothing of what you expect from the blessed God, and what every Moment you receive, tho' you so ill requite him. Did not you expect your Parents Care, the Magistrates Defence, your Ministers Labours, your Neighbours Favour and Help? How would you be dealt by, if you were in the case of the Poor or Distressed, and they in yours? Would you think it well done in all, or any of these, to be as unconcerned, selfish, oppressive, cruel, or useless, as you resolve to be to them, in what-ever Capacity or Relation you stand. Our Lord's Rule was approved by *Pagans*, tho' condemned by you, *Matth. 7. 12*. What would become of the Interest of Christ, the Welfare of the Nation, the Good of Societies, Religious or Civil, if every Man were as selfish and unconcerned for a common Good as you resolve to be? All Safety, Harmony, Liberties, Order and Comfort, would be expelled, and their contraries alone take place: But, if this

state of Things be thy abhorrence, ask thy self, Why should not all others be as self-ish as I am, if it be justifiable in me? Or, why should not I be as publick Spirited as they, if it be praise-worthy and useful in them? Are you an ill Magistrate, why should any others be better? Are you an unfaithful Minister, why should any others be more faithful? Are you careless of the common Liberties of your Country or City, why should any other, in your station, be more concerned? Are you strait-handed to the Poor, wherefore should others of your Estate be more liberal? Are you indifferent about the Truth, Interest, and Gospel of Christ, why should any other in your circumstances more expose themselves? You must consent that all these may as justly excuse themselves from benefiting others as you can; or else you are most basely spirited, to think others should serve a Common Good that you may share therein, but that you must be excepted from contributing to that Service, that so you may pursue your own private Interest the more.

Directions. Weigh these things often, and deliberately judge of thy Resolves not to serve thy Generation. Go and *humble* thy self before God, and earnestly *pray* to him, in Christ's Name, to change thy Heart, subdue thy Lusts, and give thee
another

another Spirit: *Enter into Covenant with Christ, to deny thy self, to take up thy Cross and follow him.* From this time, firmly engage in Christ's strength, that thou wilt not *consult thy flesh* in thy undertakings, but keep thy self from under the influence of a narrow Spirit, and base Lusts, as being very ill Advisers in thy course of Life, and as unfit Disposers of thy Estate, Gifts, or Power. Set upon doing publick Good *presently*, tho' it be with great reluctancy at first; the less good thou hast hitherto done, now attempt to do the more: And the later you begin, redeem the remainder of your days by the greater Projects, and more vigorous Endeavours. Pray earnestly, and attend Gospel Means for sincere love to God and Man, and for a believing sight of invisible Things; and keep your Consciences under a tender, lively sence of God's Authority, and the Day of Judgment.

2. To such as are unfeignedly willing to serve their Generation, account it a greater Mercy than the greatest Estates or Abilities with a narrow Soul, which thereby would be a Snare. Abhor a suggestion as if God dealt hardly by you, in making service your Duty, or inclining you to it; for, in the first, God's Wisdom and Goodness in the Government of this World appears. In the last, he hath ho-

noured and benefited you, in anointing you his Instruments. Our Lord Jesus was wont to say, *It is more blessed to give, than to receive*, Acts 20. 35. Which the Apostle useth as a Motive to Mens labouring, that they *might support the weak*, relieve the needy, &c. We imitate God as far as we are beneficent, for he is the Fountain whence all Wants are supplied, tho' he is benefited by none; and yet, for our Encouragement in doing Good, he is pleased to account himself a Borrower, *Prov. 19. v. 17. He that hath pity on the Poor, lendeth to the Lord*. Not that you can give what is not his already, but that he is as sure to re-pay, as if you lent it to him.

But this Head being too general to admit so distinct an Application, as the several Sorts and Conditions of such be who are truly willing to serve their Generation requires; I shall address my self to them in these several Instances, which distinguish their Cases, and give suitable Directions.

I. To such as are capable of no very great service to their Generation; as being of small Estates, low Parts, and the like.

Serve you your Generation as you can in your lower Place: To which end, *beg God's Direction*, that you may not mistake your Place or Work; nor be left to your
self

self in the meanest Service. *Go not out of your own Calling*, for God will neither accept nor bless Encroachments on other Mens Work. nor your usurpation of Power of your own Heads ; no, nor at their pleasure who are not authorized to give it, 1 Cor. 7. 20. Levit. 10. 1. *Do not presumptuously attempt what is above your ability*, for that's not your Duty, and it may turn to publick detriment. Take care that you pretend not publick Usefulness as a Cover to an idle neglect of your Callings, or pragmatistical Business in what belongs not to you : For this discovers your corruption, and will end in hurt and scandal. Be sure that what you give to Good Uses *be your own*, and not what is another Man's : For this is Fraud, and not Charity ; and instead of being liberal you will be unjust. And yet be conscientiously ready and vigorous to do *all the good* you can ; your lesser Ability must be as faithfully used as if it were greater ; nor will your having no more, excuse your unprofitableness with what you have. *Instruct your Family*, tho' you are not Preachers ; pray for and be affected with the state of the Church of God and the Nation, if you can do no more. *Vote* for good Men into Office, encourage faithful Ministers as you are able, give to what Poor you can, and acquaint others with the case

of such you cannot relieve your selves. What little Good you can do, let it be done *cheerfully*, and from love. See that you use Diligence, and avoid all Waste in your Persons and Families, that you may be capable of doing the greater good. Be *savoury* in Discourse, *exemplary* in Life, and ready to help those who know less than your selves. And lastly, Do not envy others, nor murmur that you are in no higher station than you are, for God knew what place of service you were fittest for; if you be faithful in that, he will accept and reward it, and if fit he will capacitate you for higher Work. Nay, you may prove of far greater use in this station than you can now perceive; who knows what success God may give to thy Advice, or other Endeavours? To thy Children, Servants, &c. and how Eminent they may prove?

2. To such as are capable of eminent Service to their Generation, and willing to it, keep a humble sense of your unworthiness, that God should make you able and willing to do him greater service than others, and answerably praise him for it as the Sovereign Bestower both of ability and willingness; also be watchful over your hearts, that your Ends be upright in whatever service you perform, and abhor an Opinion of meriting from God by the most
you

you do; in all which you have *David* for a lively Example, 1 Chron. 29. 10. to the 17. *We thank thee, and bless thy glorious Name: But who am I, and what is my People, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee; all this store cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness, &c.* Do not judge it enough that you perform as great Services as others, when you are capable of, and called to more; nor let the less useful (however many) of your station prescribe to you, for they will not justify your neglects. Let not meer difficulty, danger, nor expence, cause you to conclude, yea or to suspect you are not called to this or that eminent Service, for your call must be adjusted by other Rules (of which before) where opportunity for great things offer, delay not, lest that being lost, it may not be recalled, or more hinderances intervene. Judge of Unusefulness and incumbent Service by what your Consciences suggest in great dangers (as on a Sick-Bed) and in the liveliest frame by fullest communion with God (as after the Lord's Supper, &c.) for these are Seasons to make the truest Judgment in what concerneth eminent Usefulness. Never make your abilities or activeness serve a Faction as distinguished from, much less as opposed

to a publick Interest; for hereby you act selfishly, and not as Christians, and will be more hurtful to the publick concernments of Christ, than if you did nothing at all; and be the more guarded against this, because the Heads of Factions will solicit such as you, and Satan will set in with your misguided Zeal, as knowing he can make no other use of you; now that you are honestly willing to be serviceable. If you are persons eminently useful, do not hastily govern your Activity by the Opinion of others; if weak Men misinterpret your well-adjusted Attempts, be you resolved; should many good Men blame you never so much for your performance, adhere to, and still pursue it whiles you have good ground to believe it's the fittest means to prevent a publick Mischief, or produce a general Benefit. The Reasons of this Direction are these; the Opinion and Censures of most Men are very weak and misguided; Satan hath access to the Imagination of good Men, and oft employs such to obstruct great Designs, *Mat. 16. 23.* And Men entirely devoted to God in the Service of their Generation, after some time of faithful acquitting themselves therein, they stand more in God's secret. and by experience are fitter to judge of publick good and hurt than other good Men be.

What-

Whatever offers as your present work do, not thinking lesser things needless, when you have not greater things at present to undertake; for you know not what great good a seemingly small endeavour may do (as Advice to a Child) this is your present work, the most of your time is not filled with opportunities of very great Services, these lesser Attempts being very frequent, as taking up so much of our time, will amount together to great Service, a very great part of our lives will be unprofitably spent, if we neglect these lower endeavours, and most Mens unusefulness is greatly owing to a disregard to these. But yet see the greatest Services be still preferred to lesser when in competition. Keep a jealous watch over your selves, that no Lusts prescribe your work, be admitted into it, or nourished by it; to which end see that you do *nothing through strife or vain-glory, Phil. 2. 3.* or for covetous ends. Despise not others who cannot equal your Service, or do need it; think not your great Services give you an allowance in any way of sin, or that they are a compensation for it, or will be accepted in commutation for the opposite duties, &c. I give this direction, because Satan's Wiles are deep, and his Attempts on the eminently useful are many, various and unwearied; the remains of corruption are great in the
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best, Lusts are deceitful, and signal Service is an apt occasion to be improved.

Look to Christ for strength and fervour, for fresh Anointings, and continual Conduct, that you may omit nothing which God assigneth you to do in your Generation; nor take up with any excuse which he will not approve of when he comes to judge the secrets of all hearts; because of *our selves we can do nothing; by his strength we can do all, Phil. 4. 13.* We need new supplies in every new business, and the more as its importance is; and by dependence we shall and must receive it.

3. To Useful persons under discouragements in their Service.

Still persist in your work; for the greater opposition you meet with in it, the more likely it is to be subservient to Christ's present Designs, and to produce the greater Effects in a common good, since Satan is so active to obstruct thee. *Gird up the loins of your mind, and hope to the end, 1 Pet. 1. 13.* Whatever is a plain duty, will bring with it sufficient fitness, and not want success in due time; no, rightly directed labour in the work Christ hath upon the Wheel will be lost, tho' success may be delayed, and the work seem dead for a season, that so the World may be prepared to submit to it, and Christ's Victory may appear the greater as it baffleth

flesh the Confidence of Satan and his Instruments. When ready to faint, tell thy Soul, *I must not be weary in well doing, for I shall reap if I faint not.* You have God as eminently concerned for you, and in you, as you can be engaged for him; his Perfections will uphold you in all that which his Authority sets you upon; and he allows you to place to his Account the losses, reproaches and hardships you sustain in his Cause, neither shall you lose thereby, *Mark 10. 29, 30.* Search lest there be any sin unrepented of which interrupt his supporting Comforts, or that you have too much confided in your own Abilities, or ascribed the honour of past successes or performances to your selves. Pour out your complaints, and your apprehensions of your own weakness before the Lord, who is full of pity and faithful, and whose *strength is manifest in our weakness, 2 Cor. 12. 8, 9.* Be much in the contemplations of Heaven; review your own experiences of seasonable sufficient supports when your fears were as great as at present, and attentively think it's but a little while and my work is over; *He that shall come, will come, and will not tarry,* and all the promises of perseverance were made to Souls in Eminent Service by doing and suffering, which you may safely apply to your selves, expecting those greater Consolations, and
Supplies

Supplies which God will not disappoint you in.

4. To useful Persons inclining to Remission in the Service of their Generation.

The greatest part of this Discourse being so much directed to your Case, I shall only advise you to renew your Covenant with God in Christ. Reflect on your selves, what you found when vigorously useful, and what you feel now in this declining Frame : Enquire what forfeitures you have made of the Spirits quickening influences, or what lust begins to invade your Souls, or what Carnal thing is setting up for an Idol. Pray earnestly for exciting Grace, and be much in such Soliloquies as these, *Am not I a Redeemed Sinner ? and shall I neglect the interests of my Redeemer ? Shall I disregard the end of my Being, break my Vows, be false to my trust ? Is it not in well-doing that I grow weary ? Are my Talents less accountable for, than they were, or have I now more reason to think that my Abilities were not given for Publick use ? Where shall I stop if I recover not ? What shall I be doing the residue of my time, if I cease to be useful ? What may I meet with to awaken me out of this slothful Sleep ? Do others less need my help, or have I the leave of God to be remiss ? Can I think Christ a worse Master than before*

fore; or Heaven less worthy of my pains? Dare I commend the unprofitable part of Mankind that I am thus about to justify; or condemn the eminently useful, whom now I seem resolved to censure? Must not I shortly on a Death-bed reflect on what a barren life I am going to live, and the blessed Courses I put a stop too? Have I done more already than Christ deserves at my hands, who died for me? or would I be content he should now more remissly intercede in my behalf? Plead such things closely and frequently with your Hearts, and force a deliberate answer, that all may issue in fresh resolves, to be more vigorous than ever, and in shame and grief that you could be inclinable to remissness in Publick Service.

I shall conclude the whole with three cautions, to all who are willing to serve their Generation.

1. Equal nothing with the Publick which is short thereof, especially your selves. Let every thing have its due regard, and no more. Our esteem of things should be according to their value, and our concern is irregular if dissonant from our just Esteem. *Moses* words, *Exod. 32. 32. If not, blot me out of thy Book*, and *St. Paul, Rom 9. 3. For I could wish that my self were accursed from Christ*, for my Brethren were not Absolute Desires, but the regular indications of a Publick

Publick Spirit adjusting things as compared together : A Common good is above a Particular, and the more common, still the more Estimable. The very Reason why Divine Worship is proper to God is, because he is Author of all, above all, and infinitely more than the whole Creation ; yea, and we cannot but most intend his Glory in our undertakings, as our regards are most extensive ; and make every thing a selfish Idol, as we Postpone what's more Publick to it. Nevertheless, the true Order is generally inverted : Most Men do not account a Mischief or Benefit to be greater or less, as they affect the Publick, but as they affect themselves ; we begin and end at the wrong Point, and Erect a false Standard when our main concern is, how will such Publick Affairs Profit or Damage First, My own Person, then my own Family, then my own Party, then my own Nation (if at all it will reach so far) be warned against this preposterous course ; look at your selves but as small parts of the whole, and to signifie no more than as the Publick is advantaged by you. Acknowledge the interest all have in you according to their True Order and your Capacity, and obligation to be serviceable to each. Be uniform in your Course, and let God in a Common good (as such) be your Governing end : Fill up each Place
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and relation you stand in; let each have a due regard, and no more: Your own Families, the particular Church you belong to, and the Catholick Church above that; also your own City and Nation, and the World; let all these have their due, and this in just order and proportion, not exclusively of each other. Your Prayers must reach the World, your Mental Communion the Catholick Church, Occasional Communion to others then that wherein you are stated Members (tho' in many things they differ from you). In short, confine not your Care, Estate, or Advice, below, or otherwise than that Mind will dictate, which accounts the Body more valuable than a Member, and a common Good than a particular. If you are Ministers, abhor a thought that your Office obligeth you to mind no more Souls than your own Flocks.

2. Neglect not your selves whiles you mind the Publick.

Do not disregard your own Soul, no nor Body neither; keep the last in a fitness for Service, and be ever watchful that the first be in a meetness for Glory, and improving for it: *Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling, Phil. 2. 13. Receive your selves the Christ, and Mercy you offer to others; look not so Abroad as to forget you have a Home; yea, labour to*
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affect and profit your own Souls, by all your endeavours to profit others ; to walk in the light you give, and to grow in Grace by doing all the good you can. If you are Ministers, oft think of *1 Cor. 9. 27. I keep under my Body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast away.*

3. Disregard not the first or least declinings, in those Graces that are the springs of publick Service, but be intent to get their vigorous Exercise restored as soon as you perceive abatement.

Very imperfect *Actings* will follow decaying Graces, and *strengthening* the last is the way to perfect the first, *Rev. 3. 2. As Ephesus decayed in her first love, she abated her first works, Rev. 2. 4. 5. which were Labours and Sufferings for publick use, v. 3. Unbelief, enmity to God and Man, and a narrow Spirit, grow as Faith, Love, and a publick Spirit weaken ; and those will as much obstruct your Usefulness, as these contribute to it : they will pervert your Judgment, abate your Delight, aggravate your Difficulties, frame Excuses, find Diversions, enervate Motives, and many other ways lessen your Service ; and as they grow, they tend to still further Abatements in the opposite Graces. Oh ! where will these declensions stop, if you allow them ? And every Day you will be less able*

able and disposed to recover your former strength; and consequently, be less sure and fit to serve your Generation.

2 *Obs.* The usefullest persons die.

David fell asleep. Shall I represent this as a Warning, or as an Encouragement to Service? It hath something of both, and in each respect it's a strong Motive to serve our Generation.

1. It's a Warning to be useful whiles you live; for Work, or Loyter you, Death is daily making its Approaches, and when it seizeth, it will be in vain to wish to be spared for greater use, or resolve to do what you hitherto neglected: Death sets a period to our Endeavours to benefit the Church or Nation, our Friends or Relations; they can expect no further advantage by us. Therefore in a sence of your own frailty, and the certainty of dying within a short while, resolve with our blessed Saviour, *Joh. 9. 4. I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day, the night cometh when no Man can work.* It's a Mercy to have nothing undone which God gave us Life for, and to be finishing it when the Arrest of Death is felt.

2. It's an Encouragement to such as faithfully serve their Generation. The usefullest fall asleep; not, indeed, if it were such a sleep as rendred the separated Soul unactive, for continued Service here

would be more pleasing and profitable to them than such a sleep as that ; but it's a rest from Labour, tho' not from Work ; from Pain, but not from Pleasure to the departed Soul, which will be with Christ ; and tho' separated for a while, is sure to be re-united to the Body at the Resurrection. It's a Woe to the unprofitable World, that eminently useful Men are Dead, for you can hope for no further help, nor expect any benefit by them ; they left you barren and miserable after all their Labours, and must be terrible Witnesses against you. It's a loss to the Church and Nation, that such eminently useful Men must die ; the Defence, Glory, and Blessing of a People are removed ; what an open breach is made ? The Earth's endangered by removal of such Pillars. These are the Chariots of *Israel*, and the Horse-men thereof, *2 King. 13. 14.* There be but few such among the multitude of Christians, and their loss is not easily made up ; but to the faithful eminently useful Saint, it's a privilege he shall die, (being all such are not to be translated) he *would not live always*, *Job 7. 16.* for by Death he goes into better company ; he'll be freed from a weight that clogg'd him tho' he moved so fast ; the Sin and Sorrow he felt he is to feel no more ; he shall enjoy Christ in another manner, relish Pleasures in a higher

higher way, and possess what he hoped and waited for. Death must be his great Advantage, to whom faithful and publick Service is his very Business and Trade whiles he liveth : *To me to live is Christ, and to die is Gain*, Phil. I. 21, 22.

Instead of the Application of this Doctrine, I shall turn my Discourse to the Occasion of our present Meeting, the Death of your Pastor Dr. *Samuel Annesley*, in whom we have the whole Text exemplified ; *he served his Generation, and he is fallen asleep.*

In the last part, a just cause of Mourning is presented, with respect to many more than our selves ; in the former, a lively Example is proposed for our imitation ; as to both, here's a convincing instance. We see it's possible for Men in our Age to serve their Generation, and yet the greatest Usefulness prevents not Death ; for he, who was so eminently Useful, lies now Dead: He began early, he continued long, and never ceas'd to serve his Generation, until by Death he was allowed to rest from his Labours.

He was born of very godly Parents, at *Kellingworth near Warwick*, Anno 1620. and their only Child. The Name *Samuel* was appointed for him by his eminently Pious Grand-mother, who died before his Birth, and gave this reason for her desire that he

should be so called, *I can say I have asked him of God.* His Infancy was as strangely impressed with the thoughts of being a Minister, (to which his Parents dedicated him from the Womb) which so transported him from 5 or 6 years old, as to engage him to unusual Industry in what improv'd him in order to it; then it was he took up a custom which he always observed, *viz.* Reading 20 Chapters in the Bible every Day. Our God, to whom the end is known from the beginning, was as provident in forming him for great Service, as he was forward in those indications that he should be employed therein; this appeared in the hale and bardy constitution of his Body, which was such, as to endure the coldest Weather, without Hat, Gloves, or Fire. For many years, he seldom drank any thing besides Water; his Sight so strong, that to his Death he read the smallest Print without Spectacles, and in a Life lengthened to his 77th Year. He was rarely sick; his Natural capacity was good, and his temper vigorous and warm, which his Grace over-ruled (mostly) to undertake those excessive Labours, and sustain the Difficulties, which, without a Body and Mind so fashioned, had been impossible, in so long a course of Service. And this vigour he so retained to his very Death, as if God would give an instance, That the
fervour

fervour of some Mens Souls, in his Work, were either independent on the Body, or their Bodies (with *Moses*) were still repaired even to Old Age, when he designeth extraordinary Services by them.

But which was more, he was (not only thus separated) but also sanctified from the Womb; oft since declaring, *He never knew the time he was not Converted.*

About 15 Years of Age he went to *Oxford*, where he gave such Instances of his Piety and Diligence, as would engage a Recital, if I resolved not to omit these, with all other things, (tho' very laudable) except his Usefulness; his ripe Fruits, which fed so many, my regard is to.

A Heart so naturally bent for God's Glory, and the good of Souls, cou'd admit no longer delays from Work, than what a due fitness for it, and a regular call unto it, made necessary; yet so long Conscience obliged him to desist, he well knowing that the strongest desires of Ministerial Work, in the unqualified and uncalled, will not justify their usurpation of the Office, nor prevent Disorders and Damage to the Church and themselves, by their publick performances.

He began to cast his Net as Chaplain to the Earl of *Warwick*, (then *Admiral*) and thence removed to *Cliff* in *Kent*, where he met with a Storm more tempestuous

than at Sea ; for the people of that Place being fond of their ejected Minister, as greatly pleasing them by his Company at their Dancing, Drinking, and Merriments on the Lord's Day, they were so prejudic'd against this his Successor, as to rise against him with Spits, Forks and Stones, threatening his Death at his first coming ; a hard Province for a Divine not much above 22 Years of Age ! But here God gave him room for his intense Zeal, fit Objects to direct and engage his Ministry to Conversion Work, and an early Specimen of his own resolvedness in God's Work, as well as Experience of the good God designed by him, and care he had of him. For having some prospect of doing good among that People, (who, tho' Ignorant and Prophane, yet not hardned by resisting Gospel Light) he told them, *Let them use him how they would, he was resolved to continue with them, till God had fitted them by his Ministry to entertain a better, who should succeed him ; but yet solemnly declared, that when they became so prepared, he would leave that place.* Here his Labours were unwearied, and such efficacy accompanied the Word preached, and his winning behaviour, that in a few years the people were greatly Reformed, their Enmity changed into a passionate kindness, which appear'd, as in many other instances, so in their loud cries
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and many tears, when he let them know he judged himself obliged to remove, according to his former Declaration. (not to decide whether such a promise was Obligatory or no) his tender concern lest any seeming lightness of his might prove a scandal to his young Converts, so governed him, that lest this place with 400 *l. per Annum* ; but Divine Providence had great purposes to serve hereby.

Cliff was not a Stage large enough for the Uses God designed by this active Soul, nor a Hill high enough for the notice of one so Exemplary. Having procured a Successor fit to build on the Foundation, so prosperously laid by him, he resigns himself to Divine disposal, to be employed where-ever his Call should point with the clearest Evidence. A very signal Providence directed him to a settlement in *London*, Anno 1652. by the unanimous Choice of the Inhabitants of *John* the Apostle ; soon after he is made Lecturer at *Paul's*. And in 5th *Cripplegate* was made happy by his settlement there: In this Place he continued a most labourious faithful Preacher (tho' removed from his Lecture in the Year 60.) till that twice unhappy *Barthomew-Day*, 1662. the first by the *Parisian* Massacre, this last by the silencing of about 2000 faithful Ministers in this Kingdom, where their Labours were far more necessary

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cessary than the Ends pretended for their Ejection were valuable. His abode hath been ever since in this City, where he finished his course, *December 31. Anno 1696.*

Having briefly represented the Sphere wherein he moved with respect to his Office and Places of abode, &c. it remaineth that I give some hints of the nature and manner of his motion therein. Where shall I begin, when so many Things present themselves? It's hard reducing them into order, when such a variety of great Things meet; it's not easie to judge which most contributed to his just Character, *viz.* An eminently useful Man in his Generation. In most Things he was a Pattern worthy to be imitated. In many Things it will be difficult for most I know to resemble him. And in what few Things he came short of some, yet his Integrity Zeal, and publick Spirit, rendred him in extensive Usefulness more than equal. In Ministerial Labours he was abundant; where was a more constant Preacher? Very oft, before his silencing, thrice a day; in the late Troubles almost every day; since this Liberty twice every Lord's-Day, (too long) even to his last Sicknes; being dissuaded from the last Sermon, because of his Illness after the Mornings, he was unpersuadable, saying, *I must work whiles it's Day.* Who ever knew

knew him, from his very Youth, refuse to preach in any Place when asked? Few, if any, so ready to assist in Fasts and Lectures. The sick were sure of assistance if they sent to him; doubting Souls never were denied access, or found discouragement, harshness, or treachery, when they made their Cases known. Did his many Labours abate their substance and tendency to common Good? No, he so redeemed Time, that his Sermons were not raw, but well studied and substantial; his Utterance not remiss, but earnest, as one concerned to profit others; being himself affected, and having something that very peculiarly expressed his *heartiness* in all he said. By his very often reading over the Scriptures from his Childhood, he became a great Textuary; and by aptly produced Texts, he oft surprised eminent Ministers; as his solution of Cases of Conscience (which his Sermons much consisted of) did instruct and satisfy them.

His Care and Toil extended to every Place where he might be profitable: Of whom in an equal station can it be so truly said? On him was the care of all the Churches. When any Place wanted a Minister, he set himself to get them one. When any Minister was oppressed by Poverty, he soon employed himself for his Relief. O, how many Places had sate in
darkness,

darkness, how many Ministers had been starved, if Dr. *Annesley* had died 34 Years since ! The Gospel he even forced into several ignorant Places ; and was the chief (oft the sole) Instrument in the Education, as well as Subsistence, of several Ministers.

The Morning Lecture (so profitable to many) he alone supported ; I wish it die not with him : For what one Man hath Zeal and Interest enough (with leisure) to keep it up ? It was by him the Meetings of Ministers, before this Liberty, were kept up ; and since the Union, in his Place and to his Expence, they have been continued. What a multitude of all sorts were supplied by his Care ! Bibles, Catechisms, and all profitable Books, dispersed far and near. The Sick, the Widows, the Orphans were innumerable, whom he relieved and settled. By the Poor he was crowded as a Common Father. You may well ask how could all this be done by him. I Answer : Of all Gifts, Salary, and Incomes, he always laid aside the Tenths for Charity, even before any were spent by him, which is the greater instance of his bountiful Mind, considering his numerous Family, many Losses, and great Straights : Thus his Light directed ; and then he would be faithful to it, what-ever Expence or Hardship followed. And being
satisfied

satisfied it was just to do so, his fervent Love to God and Man prevented all repinings, and made him a most chearful Giver. But this, since he was silenced, bearing no proportion to the great Things he constantly undertook; to supply it he was the faithful Almoner of many; and so importunate a Petitioner for Charitable uses, that few could escape or deny him; and most of his own People he had instilled his own Charitable Disposition into (who are apt to be of the same Spirit with their admired Pastors.)

These assiduous Labours, and extensive Beneficence, were accompanied with several Excellencies which sustained them, and tended to make him a successful Blessing, or his Heart and Hands had failed.

He was a Man of great *uprightness*, he squared not his Profession by his Secular Interest, tho' he had a large Family; yet he quitted a full Maintenance, rather than sin against God by Conformity. Before then he was turned out of his Lecture, and kept out a while, because he could not comply with some Extravagancies of the late Times; and since hath he suffered, because he must witness for the Old Truth against *Antrinomianism*. His Integrity made him a Stranger to all Tricks, and sometimes his Charity betrayed him to be impos'd on by such as use them.

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His Humility was signal, he seemed to have the meanest Opinion of his own Gifts and Labours, highly esteeming others, and envying none ; no, not the acceptance of our promising young Ministers. He might say, with *David, I prayer* ; as if made up of that. Every Day he prayed twice in his Family, to the last moment that he was capable. His usual way was to pray 3 or 4 times a day in his Study. Upon every extraordinary Occurrence in his House he kept a Fast. Under every Affliction, before he would speak of it, or pitch on means to redress it, he spread it still before God in Prayer ; which brought him, tho' a most affectionate Husband, to bear the News of his Wives death with that composure, as calmly to say, *The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.* And after the greatest Losses, he was used to speak of them with an unconcernedness, as if anothers, not his own. In Prayer he was mighty, and the returns remarkable and frequent. He could trust God with all, and was still resigned to his Will. His solicitous concern was, that God might not be dishonoured. When he lay Sick, this was oft repeated, *Oh ! that I may not dishonour God in my last moments, whom, in my poor manner, I made it the business of my Life to honour. Oh ! that I may not dishonour my God by my*
impatience.

impatience. Being one Night under exceeding torture, he called his Daughter, then present, and charged her not to entertain one hard thought of God, by any thing he felt, but be assured he is infinitely Merciful, and none are happy but those that serve him ; he gives peace of Conscience, that's beyond all the World can give, none can die cheerfully but a Christian ; he shines on my Soul through Christ. God and Heaven were so habituated to him, that in some disorder in his Head, by his Distemper fixing there, he still kept the same Savour, breathed the same Spirit, and spake of Divine Matters most consistently. His Head was not free of those Projects for God, which in Health it was ever full of. I'll end this with Mr. *Baxter's* (who knew not how to flatter or fear any Man) Account of him ; *Dr. Annesley is a most Sincere, Godly, Humble Man, totally devoted to God.* (Mr. B's. *Life.*)

Having hinted some things that respect the Excellency of this Person, some may whisper, but what Tokens of God's Favour had this useful Man more than others, he had many Troubles and Exercises ? God testified his Favour to him in Instances which he most esteemed, and pursued above all things ; yea, despised and renounced all compared therewith ; which is enough to testify him a happy Man, what-

what ever he endured or wanted ; God kept him faithful in his Work to the last ; for which he thus thanked God on his Death-Bed ; Blessed be God. I can say, I have been faithful in the Work of the Ministry above 55 Years. He had great success in his Work ; many called him Father, as the Instrument of their Conversion ; the worthy Mr. *Brand* was one ; many called him Comforter.

In all his sufferings he found supports which kept him as chearful as his Office and Age allowed under all ; yea, 17 weeks pain without a discontented Word or Thought. Signal returns of Prayer he frequently had ; and very close Communion with God in Christ. His Charity and Care wanted not comfortable Effects. How many whom he contributed to the Education of are useful Ministers ? In how many Places doth Religion flourish by his means ? God gave him a great Interest in the Hearts of most Ministers and serious People. How oft and long did they pray for his Life, as a publick Blessing ? And how generally is his Death lamented ? He thankfully owned God in all. He signally witnessed for him in his Judgments on several of his Persecutors. One died signing a Warrant to apprehend him. Many might be instanced, but it's fit we cover such in acknowledgment of present Quiet.

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He had uninterrupted peace and assurance of God's Covenant-Love for above 30 years last past. It's true, he walked in Darkness for several years before that, which is common to those who are converted in Childhood, their change not being remarkable, and so apter to be questioned; and they oft make up, in a long time, by frequent returns, the sad hours that others have pressing in at once. But God had a further design, *viz.* The fitting and enclining him to relieve wounded Consciences by his Ministry and Discourse, wherein he was so Eminent, that most troubled Souls resorted to him: He used to say, that this made him unable to preach a Sermon without some Word to them.

This Assurance had not one Cloud in all his Disease: He oft said, I've no doubt, nor shadow of doubt, all's clear between God and my Soul; he Chains up Satan, he cannot trouble me.

To conclude all, *He had an abundant entrance into God's Kingdom.* He was reconciled to Death; yea, so desirous of it, as hardly induced him to have his Life prayed for. But hearing some Ministers had been fervently praying for his Life, he replied, I'm then more reconciled to Life than ever, for I'm confident God will not give a Life so eminently, in answer of Prayer,

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as mine must be, if he would not use it to greater purposes than ever before.

Yet some little time before his change, his desires of Death appear'd strong, and his Soul filled with the foretastes of Glory; oft saying, Come my dearest Jesus, the nearer the more precious, the more welcome. Another time his joy was so great, that in an extasie he cried out, I cannot contain it, what manner of Love is this to a poor Worm? I can't express the thousandth part of what praise is due to thee; we know not what we do when we offer at praising God for his Mercies; it's but little I can give, but Lord help me to give thee my All. I'll die praising thee, and rejoice that there's others can praise thee better. I shall be satisfied with thy likeness; satisfied, satisfied! Oh my dearest Jesus I come.

Now do not you think Christ is worth the faithfullest Service which ends in this manner? To you of this Congregation, (for whose Salvation he was so concerned) shall I say, bewail the loss of him, when you are so sensible? Yet that's but Just. Bless God for your enjoying his faithful Labours so long; see that none of you perish, after such pains to save you; be established in the Truths you have heard, which you see governed his Life to such great purposes, and helped him to die with sure

sure Triumph: Shew your regard to his Memory by kindness to his Family, and by not breaking off from this Church, that he may not be reflected on by your giddiness, as if he Taught you no better, or Established you no more, than to be deluded to serve a Carnal Turn, in prerence of greater Purity. You, his Children, live your Fathers Advice and Example, or what a Witness will he be against you? Let us all go hence with a due sence of it: The World hath lost a Blessing, the Church hath lost a Pillar; the Nation hath lost a Wrestler with God; the Poor have lost a Benefactor. You, his People, have lost a Faithful Pastor; his Children, a Tender Father; we, in the Ministry, an Exemplary Fellow Labourer.

F I N I S.

There is now in the Press,

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